

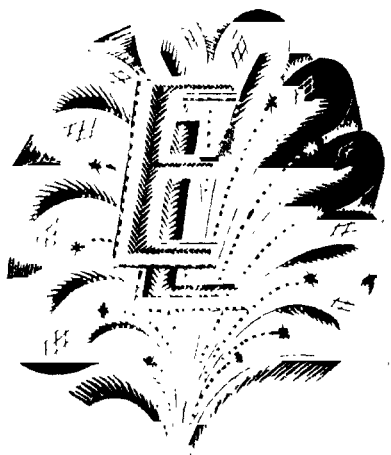


# THE LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

INTRODUCTION BY GUY POCOCK

IN TWO VOLS.

VOLUME ONE



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In thy most need to go by thy side.

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### BIOGRAPHY

#### THE LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

VOLUME I

ARRANGED BY GUY POCOCK IN 2 VOLUMES  
FROM THE COMPLETE, ANNOTATED EDITION OF  
THE LETTERS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

EDITED BY E. V. LUCAS

CHARLES LAMB, born in February 1775 in Crown Office Row in the Temple, London. Educated at Christ's Hospital. Employed in South Sea House, 1789-92; clerk in India House, 1792-1825. Died in December 1834 and buried in Edmonton churchyard.

THE LETTERS OF  
CHARLES LAMB



VOLUME ONE

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## INTRODUCTION

It is to be understood that the present edition is no 'new edition,' except in so far as it supersedes the admirable but less comprehensive work of William Macdonald first published in Everyman's Library in 1909. New editing is no longer possible, unless and until there is a great find of letters—before 1796 perhaps, or to fill the gaps between 1809 and 1818—and that is now more than unlikely. For E. V. Lucas, in his full three-volume edition of 1935, printed all the known letters of Charles Lamb and his sister, and certain famous replies, and in his comprehensive annotation said about them all there is to be said. The present edition is simply a reduction of that great work to manageable proportions.

This 1935 edition of E. V. Lucas's contained all letters published in the editions of T. N. Talfourd, the first compiler; of Percy Fitzgerald, of Bohn's Library, of Ainger, of W. Carew Hazlitt, of William Macdonald—the previous Everyman edition—of the Boston Bibliophile Society, and of Mr. Lucas's own edition of 1912; while through Mr. Hugh Dent's enthusiasm and his firm's acquisition of 'residuary legatee's rights,' and by the courtesy of collectors and co-operation of publishers, it was possible to include every known letter, and all with the fullest possible annotation. It had been a thirty years' task, this collecting and collating, arranging in chronological order, verifying and annotating. It entailed travel, too; for apart from the Bernard Barton correspondence in the British Museum and the Dyce and Forster treasures in the Victoria and Albert Museum, all the letters are now in America, in the University of Texas, the H. E. Huntington Library, and so forth. And so the great work was finished, and published jointly by Methuen and Dent in 1935; and in his introduction Mr. Lucas pays special tribute to the wonderful research work of Mrs. Anderson—whom he quotes constantly in the notes, as will be seen; and to Mr. Edmund Blunden, 'whose writings on Lamb yield to none in sympathetic understanding and even inspiration.'

The present Everyman volume, then, is simply the comprehensive 'E. V. Lucas' edition reduced in size to suit the general reader. To begin with, the letters of Mary Lamb have gone—or all but a few which

she and her brother wrote jointly—and with them the relevant notes. Next, many of the poems and passages mentioned in the letters and quoted in full in the notes have now been cut, except for references. The omission of a number of Lamb's own letters was a more delicate and difficult matter, for one would not willingly spare anything of this priceless collection. But it had to be done; and in a way the problem solved itself. For two things were obvious: first, that very few of the letters to his famous friends—Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Southey, and the rest—could possibly be dispensed with; and secondly—as the reader will rapidly discover—the more intimate the friendship the more admirable the letter in respect of humour and essential Elian whimsicality. It would seem that a correspondent such as Manning inspired Charles Lamb to write at his very best—a best that is unsurpassed and inimitable. No such letters could possibly be spared. It remained, then, to reduce the great collection by omission of the rather more formal letters, and letters to lesser known correspondents; and this has accordingly been done. But even of these many had to be retained, for, as Lamb's friend, Thomas Noon Talfourd, says in the preface to his early edition: 'There is, indeed, scarcely a note (a notelet, he used to call his very little letters) Lamb ever wrote, which has not some tinge of that quaint sweetness, some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim, which distinguishes him from all other poets and humourists.'

Take, for example, two simple instances. Few readers will recognize the name of Henry Dodwell of the East India House; but, for all that, how can one omit a letter that conveys the first inklings of the immortal essay on Roast Pig? Or again, there is a letter to Crabb Robinson, which consists of one line and a half, but it cannot be dispensed with: 'I have left the d——d India House for Ever! Give me great joy. C. Lamb.'

So much for debit. On the credit side the gains are very great. First, it has been found possible, largely by using a different type-face, to include over a hundred and twenty more letters than in the previous Everyman edition. Moreover, where a reply, such as Coleridge's moving letter to Charles Lamb after the tragedy, or an eye-witness account, such as Haydon's own description of the immortal dinner-party on 28th

December 1817, made for a fuller understanding of this great autobiography—for such and no less is what the Letters present—then these replies and descriptions have been included, in chronological position, in the notes. Again, certain of the best and wittiest of Lamb's light poems have been included, in addition to those which are an integral part of certain letters. And then there is E. V. Lucas's annotation, comprehensive and scholarly to a degree: the greater part of this has been included; most, in fact, except the notes referring to deleted letters, and others of more particular bibliographical interest than it was thought the average Everyman reader could stomach, while certain somewhat lengthy biographical notes have had to be cut down. Translations of the letters Charles Lamb wrote in Latin are included, and these, like all the notes, replies, and excerpts, follow the letters to which they refer, instead of being lumped together at the end.

Finally, a feature of the new Everyman edition is the index, a slight, necessary abridgment of the grand index to the complete edition, compiled by Mr. Vernon Rendall, which E. V. Lucas has described as 'a model of its kind.'

As to the Letters, with their fancy and fun, their inimitable wit and humour, their marvellous verbal felicity, their sweet humanity which never sinks to sentimentality or shows a sign of weakness—they speak for themselves, and laudatory editorial comment is neither here nor there. Finer even, or at least lovelier, than the Essays, they open, as it were, a window into the heart of Charles Lamb—a great heart, it ever there was one. Nobody from Cicero to the present day has ever told more delicately, wittily, intimately, of his moods, the day's doings, the give-and-take of friendship; and it is through the letters that Charles Lamb remains the best loved of all English writers.

He was fortunate in his friends and correspondents: the Wordsworths, Coleridge, Southey, Hazlitt, Manning, Leigh Hunt, and many more—men capable of appreciating Lamb's outstanding qualities, his essential goodness and nobility. Coleridge speaks of him thus:

Charles Lamb has more totality and individuality of character than any other man I know, or have ever known in my life. In most men we distinguish between the different powers of their intellect as one being predominant over the other. The genius of Wordsworth is greater than his talent, though considerable. The talent of Southey is greater than his

genius, though respectable, and so on. But in Charles Lamb it is altogether one: his genius is talent, his talent genius, and his heart is as whole and as one as his head.'

Charles Lamb, as revealed in the Letters, still more than in the Essays, has become part and parcel of the English heritage.

GUY POCOCK.

## NOTE

In preparing the present abridgment it has been found necessary to transpose some of the notes and occasionally to alter their wording. A few statements of fact have been revised in the light of recent investigations. The pronoun 'I' which recurs in the notes stands, of course, for E. V. Lucas.

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June 7th, 1809.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I congratulate you on the appearance of 'The Friend.' Your first number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the 'Annual,' am I not? The 'Monthly Review' sneers at me, and asks 'if "*Comus*" is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?' because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except 'Samson Agonistes'; so because they do not know, or won't remember, that 'Comus' was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton! O Coleridge, do kill those reviews, or they will kill us—kill all we like! Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself; but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following, Mary was taken ill with fatigue of moving, and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home; she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life—out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together! I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by and bye. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised; I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at

Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan, and I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health, and liberty, and strength; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the foul fiend!

Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the 'Courier' Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing 'The White Devil,' 'Green's Tu Quoque,' and the 'Honest Whore,'—perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—that I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word; for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the 'Arcadia,' and 'Daniel,' enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish Daniel, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the 'Quarterly,' by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge it being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and pray do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure anything of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read 'Cœlebs?' It has reached eight editions in so many weeks; yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the drawback of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife' of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning:—

If ever I marry a wife  
I'll marry a landlord's daughter,  
For then I may sit in the bar,  
And drink cold brandy-and-water.

I don't expect you can find time from your 'Friend' to write to me

much, but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books; but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write; but I could not let 'The Friend' pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you?—by what conveyance?—by Longman, Shortman, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to Wordsworth. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all. C. L.

[The first number of the *Friend* was dated 1st June 1809.

Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens* had been reviewed in the *Annual Review* for 1808, with discrimination and approval (see vol. iv of my large edition), but whether or not by Coleridge I do not know.

Wordsworth's book was his pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra.

The Juvenile Poetry was *Poetry for Children, Entirely Original. By the author of 'Mrs. Leicester's School.'* In two volumes, 1809. *Mrs. Leicester's School*, 1809, had been published a little before. Wordsworth's favourite tale was Arabella Hardy's *The Sea Voyage*.

I know nothing of the annotated copy of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Daniel's *Poetical Works*, 12mo, 1718, two volumes, with marginalia by Lamb and Coleridge, is still preserved. The copy of Hannah More's *Calebs in Search of a Wife*, 1809, with Lamb's verses, is not, I think, now known. I have changed the word 'stuff,' as printed in most editions, to 'stuf,' but Lamb may have written 'stuff,' a stave.

Southey's missionary article was in the first number of the *Quarterly*, February 1809.

Hervey wrote *Meditations among the Tombs*; Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial*.]

#### 165. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Monday, 30th October 1809.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have but this moment received your letter dated the 9th inst., having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room—I have made several acquisitions since you saw them,—and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of



'The Friend.' The account of Luther in the Wartburg is as fine as anything I ever read. God forbid that a man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of £100. This Custom-and-Duty Age would have made the Preacher on the Mount take out a licence, and St. Paul's Epistles would not have been missible without a stamp. Oh, that you may find means to go on! But alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont?—Sotheby? What is become of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the Pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up into the old things.

I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents, than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see—as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life, who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints and one for Books; a Summer and a Winter parlour. When shall I ever see you in them?

C. L.

My head is sore, I write I know not what. It always is after [*the end of the sheet is torn off.*]

[Hazlitt has given some account of the Lambs' visit to Winterslow, but the passage belongs probably to the year following. In his essay 'On the Conversation of Authors' he likens Lamb in the country to 'the most capricious poet Ovid among the Goths.' 'The country people thought him an oddity, and did not understand his jokes. It would be strange if they had, for he did not make any, while he stayed. But when he crossed the country to Oxford, then he spoke a little. He and the old colleges were hail-fellow well met; and in the quadrangles he "walked gowned."' Again, in 'A Farewell to Essay-writing,' Hazlitt says: 'I used to walk out at this time with Mr. and Miss Lamb of an evening, to look at the Claude Lorraine skies over our heads melting from azure into purple and gold, and to gather mushrooms, that sprang up at our feet, to throw into our hashed mutton.'

Lamb's Hogarths were framed in black. It must have been about this time that he began his essay 'On the Genius of Hogarth,' which was printed in the *Reflector* in 1811 (see vol. i of my edition).

The *Friend* lasted until No. XXVII, 15th March 1810. The account of Luther was in No. VIII, 5th October 1809. Coleridge had not been supported financially as he had hoped, and had already begun to think of stopping the paper.

Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753–1827), of Coleorton, the friend and patron of men of genius, had helped, with Sotheby, in the establishment of

the *Friend*, and was instrumental subsequently in procuring a pension for Coleridge. William Sotheby (1757-1833), the translator and author, had received subscriptions for Coleridge's lectures.

'The rich Auditors in Albemarle Street.' Those who had listened to Coleridge's lectures at the Royal Institution.

'The Pamphlet.' Presumably Wordsworth's on the Convention of Cintra.

'You never saw a book-case.' Leigh Hunt wrote of Lamb's books in the essay 'My Books,' in the *Literary Examiner*:

It looks like what it is, a selection made at precious intervals from the book-stalls;—now a Chaucer at nine and twopence; now a Montaigne or a Sir Thomas Browne at two shillings; now a Jeremy Taylor, a Spinoza; an old English Dramatist, Prior, and Sir Philip Sidney; and the books are 'neat as imported.' The very perusal of the backs is a 'discipline of humanity.' There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old Radical friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewel: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted. Even the 'high fantastical' Duchess of Newcastle, with her laurel on her head, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to trouble herself with the constitutions of her maids.]

#### 166. TO THOMAS MANNING

Mary sends her love.

Jan. 2nd, 1810.

DEAR MANNING,

When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the posteriors which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent—cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to 'Mrs. Leicester'; the best you may suppose mine; the next

best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life—I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour: and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb of Stamford;<sup>1</sup> 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much), since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral, upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp-set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. Do you know Kate \*\*\*\*\*; I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (turkey in Europe and turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is New-Year here. That is, it was New-Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. Miss Knap is turned midwife. Never having had a child herself, she can't draw any wrong analogies from her own case. Dr. Stoddart has had Twins. There was five shillings to pay the Nurse. Mrs. Godwin was impannelled on a jury of Matrons last Sessions. She saved a criminal's life by giving it as her opinion that ———. The Judge listened to her with the greatest deference. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. Have you trampled on the Cross yet? The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common

<sup>1</sup> Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate \*\*\*\*\*. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one, but if ever one star differed from another in glory —. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the 'Friend,' which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you 'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

She 's sweet Fifteen,  
I 'm one year more.

Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which predominated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B \*\*\*\*\* is always to be met with!

Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;  
And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives.

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. Godwin, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called *paranomasia* in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. 'Ah! sir,' said she, 'I have seen better days;' 'So have I, good woman,' I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and

Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you. Mary sends her love. [*Rest cut away.*]

['I have published a little book.' The circumstance that in 1805 Phillips put forth a little work called *The Book of the Rank and Dignities of British Society* has, on the strength of Lamb's sentence, led to the association of his name with it, and there are collectors who boldly ascribe it to him. But, more than doubtful, I am utterly unconvinced. The evidence of style is against such an ascription; it is not in the Lamb tradition, which, even when he was being a hack, insisted upon themes calling for fancy and imagination.

'Stamford.' In the *Elia* essay on 'Poor Relations' Lamb says that his father's boyhood was spent at Lincoln, and in Susan Yates's story in *Mrs. Leicester's School* we see the Lincolnshire fens, but of the history of the family we know nothing. I fancy Stamford is a true touch.

'The Persian ambassador.' A portrait of this splendid person is preserved at the India Office. Leigh Hunt says that Dyer was among the pilgrims to Primrose Hill.

'Kate \* \* \* \* \*.' I have not found this.

'Mrs. Bland.' Maria Theresa Bland (1769-1838), a Jewess, and a mezzo-soprano, famous in simple ballads, who was connected with Drury Lane for many years.

'Braham is fled.' Braham did not sing in London in 1810, but joined Mrs. Billington in a long provincial tour. Phillips was Thomas Philipps (1774-1841), a singer and composer.

'Miss B \* \* \* \* \*.' Miss Burrell. See note to letter of 18th February 1818.

'Not my poetry, but Quail's.' In *An Elegie*, stanza 16. Lamb does not quote quite correctly.

'Hazlitt's grammar.' *A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue. . . . By William Hazlitt, to which is added A New Guide to the English Tongue by Edward Baldwin (William Godwin).* Published by M. J. Godwin. 1810.

'Paranomasia.' The figure is correct, although Lamb's spelling is not quite right.

'A woman begged of me.' Lamb told this story at the end of his *Elia* essay 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars,' in the *London Magazine*, June 1822, but the passage was not reprinted in book form.

Of the friends on Lamb's list we have already met several. Mr. and Mrs. Norris were the Randal Norrises, now neighbours in the Temple. Dr. Stoddart, having left Malta, was now practising law in Doctors' Commons. Mr. and Mrs. Collier were the John Dyer Colliers, the parents of John Payne Collier. Thompson may be Marmaduke Thompson of Christ's Hospital. We meet some Buffams later. Mr. Marshall was Godwin's friend. Mrs. Harwood was Holcroft's eldest daughter Sophia. Of Mrs. Lum, Mr. Dollin, and Mr. Sutton, I know nothing; but we have had the name of the ill-fated Mary Dollin in a letter to Southey (No. 40, page 109).]

## 167. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R. 7th February 1810.]

DR. R.,

My Brother whom you have met at my rooms (a plump good looking man of seven and forty!) has written a book about humanity, which I transmit to you herewith. Wilson the Publisher has put it in his head that you can get it Reviewed for him. I dare say it is not in the scope of your Review—but if you could put it in any likely train, he would rejoice. For alas! our boasted Humanity partakes of Vanity. As it is, he teases me to death with chusing to suppose that I could get it into all the Reviews at a moment's notice—I!! who have been set up as a mark for them to throw at, and would willingly consign them all to Hell flames and Megæra's snaky locks.

But here's the Book—and don't shew it Mrs. Collier, for I remember she makes excellent Eel soup, and the leading points of the Book are directed against that very process.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

At Home to-night—Wednesday.

[Addressed to 'Henry Robinson, Esq., 56 Hatton Garden, "with a Treatise on Cruelty to Animals."']

Lamb's brother, John Lamb, who was born in 1763, was now accountant of the South-Sea House. His character is described by Lamb in the *Elia* essay 'My Relations,' where he figures as James Elia. Robinson in his *Diary* later frequently expresses his dislike of his dogmatic ways.

The pamphlet has been identified by Mr. L. S. Livingston as *A Letter to the Right Hon. William Windham, on his opposition to Lord Erskine's Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*. It was published by Maxwell & Wilson at 17 Skinner Street in 1810. No author's name is given. One copy only is known, and that is in America, and the owner declines to permit it to be reprinted. The particular passage referring to eel pie runs thus:

If an eel had the wisdom of Solomon, he could not help himself in the ill-usage that befalls him; but if he had, and were told, that it was necessary for our subsistence that he should be eaten, that he must be skinned first, and then broiled; if ignorant of man's usual practice, he would conclude that the cook would so far use her reason as to cut off his head first, which is not fit for food, as then he might be skinned and broiled without harm; for however the other parts of his body might be convulsed during the culinary operations, there could be no feeling of consciousness therein, the communication with the brain being cut off; but if the woman were immediately to stick a fork into his eye, skin him alive, coil him up in a skewer, head and all, so that in the extremest agony he could not move, and forthwith broil him to death: then were the same Almighty Power that formed man from the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, to call the eel into a new existence, with a knowledge of the treatment he had undergone, and he found that the instinctive disposition which man has in common with

other carnivorous animals, which inclines him to cruelty, was not the sole cause of his torments; but that men did not attend to consider whether the sufferings of such insignificant creatures could be lessened: that eels were not the only sufferers; that lobsters and other shell fish were put into cold water and boiled to death by slow degrees in many parts of the sea coast; that these, and many other such wanton atrocities, were the consequence of carelessness occasioned by the pride of mankind despising their low estate, and of the general opinion that there is no punishable sin in the ill-treatment of animals designed for our use; that, therefore, the woman did not bestow so much thought on him as to cut his head off first, and that she would have laughed at any considerate person who should have desired such a thing; with what fearful indignation might he inveigh against the unfeeling metaphysician that, like a cruel spirit alarmed at the appearance of a dawning of mercy upon animals, could not rest satisfied with opposing the Cruelty Prevention Bill by the plea of possible inconvenience to mankind, highly magnified and emblazoned, but had set forth to the vulgar and unthinking of all ranks, in the jargon of proud learning, that man's obligations of morality towards the creatures subjected to his use are imperfect obligations!

Robinson's review was, I imagine, the *London Review*, founded by Richard Cumberland in February 1809, which, however, no longer existed, having run its brief course by November 1809.

'Megæra's snaky locks.' From *Paradise Lost*, x. 559:

and up the trees  
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks  
That curl'd Megæra.]

#### 168. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[9th April 1810.]

DEAR GUTCH,

I did not see your brother, who brought me *Wither*; but he understood, he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books have pleased me excessively: I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw '*Philareté*' before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of *Wither* and of his writings. Do you mean to have anything of that kind? What I have said on '*Philareté*' is poor, but I think some of the rest not so bad: perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies; but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil-marks will rub out. Where is the *Life*? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

Yours, with many thanks,

C. LAMB.

Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the *Satires*,

Shepherds Hunting, &c., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of his Life. But, may be, you don't want any thing, and have said all you wish in the Life.

[John Mathew Gutch (1776-1861), was at this time living at Bristol, where he owned, edited, and printed *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*. He had been printing for his own pleasure an edition of George Wither's poems, which he had sent to Lamb for his opinion, intending ultimately to edit Wither fully. Lamb returned the volumes with a number of comments, many of which he afterwards incorporated in his essay 'On the poetry of George Wither,' printed in his *Works* in 1818. Gutch subsequently handed the volumes to his friend Dr. John Nott of the Hot Wells, Bristol, who had views of his own upon Wither, and who commented in his turn on the poet and on Lamb's criticism of the poet. In course of time the volumes fell into Lamb's hands again, when Nott's comments on Wither and on Lamb received treatment. They were ultimately given by Lamb to his friend, Brook Pulham, of the India House (who made the caricature etching of 'Ælia'), and when I saw them they were in the library of the late Algernon Charles Swinburne, who admired Lamb to idolatry, at The Pines, Putney. Swinburne told the story of the book in the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1885, reprinted in his *Miscellanies*, 1886. See the notes to vol. i. of my edition of Lamb's *Works*. The last word was with Nott, for when Gutch printed a three-or-four-volume edition of Wither in 1820 under Nott's editorship, many of Lamb's best things were included as Nott's.

Further remarks by Lamb on Wither came to light in the Terry sale at the Anderson Galleries in New York on 7th November 1934, in a MS. bound up with five portraits and a scrap of a note to Charles Cowden Clarke.]

#### 169. TO BASIL MONTAGU

Mr. Hazlitt's: Winterslow, near Sarum,  
12th July, 1810.

DEAR [MONTAGU],

I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not; but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements and total failures. I cannot make any body understand why I can't do such things. It is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has received such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility. I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs. [M.]? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The Bank has stopt payment;



and every body in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with a plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone. All the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holiday.

We purpose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction of my natural rest which I suffered coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest. It is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us—we travel so seldom. If the Sun be Hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable Body of Light. How much more dignified leisure hath a mussel glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inch square! He hears the tide roll over him, backwards and forwards twice a-day (as the d——d Salisbury Long Coach goes and returns in eight and forty hours), but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on 't. He is the Owl of the Sea. Minerva's fish. The fish of Wisdom.

Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. [M.].

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[If the date is correct we must suppose that the Lambs had made a second visit to the Hazlitts and were intending to return by way of Oxford (see next letter).]

Basil Montagu was a barrister and humanitarian, a friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and afterwards step-father-in-law of Procter. He was born in 1770 and lived until 1851. Lamb probably addressed to him many other letters, also to his third wife, Carlyle's 'noble lady.' But the correspondence was destroyed by Mrs. Procter.

The MSS. referred to cannot now be identified.]

#### 170. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[9th August 1810.]

DEAR H.,

Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey) and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take

any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah—have just got her letter.

H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Leda, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Thursday.

['Epistemon.' This term for Mary Lamb—wise in counsel and prudence, possibly from the *Odyssey*, xvi. 374, with which Lamb had recently been busy for his *Wanderings of Ulysses*—illustrates his attitude, affectionate, respectful, not unmixed with fun, towards her, and refers also, it is probable, to some of her counsels to Hazlitt and his wife, to whom, when she was Miss Stoddart, Mary Lamb had written some rather disciplinary letters.

Hazlitt subsequently saw the Blenheim Titians and wrote of them with gusto in his description of the picture galleries of England.]

#### 171. TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

Monday, 18 Sep. 1810.

DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

I did not write till I could have the satisfaction of sending you word that my Sister was better. She is in fact quite restored, and will be with me in little more than a week.—I received Mr. C.'s Letter and transmitted it to Hazlitt—My kind Love to him, and to Miss W. Tell her I hope that while she stays in London, she will make our chambers her Lodging. If she can put up with half a Bed, I am sure she will be a most welcome visitor to Mary and me.—The Montagus set out for the North this day. What fine things they are going to see, for the first time! which I have seen, but in all human probability shall never see again!—the mountains often come back to me in my dreams, or rather I miss them at those times, for I have been repeatedly haunted with the same dream, which is that I am in Cumberland, that I have been there some weeks, and am at the end of my Holidays, but in all that time I

have not seen Skiddaw &c.—the Hills are all vanished, and I shall go home without seeing them. The trouble of this dream denotes the weight they must have had on my mind, and while I was there, which was almost oppressive, and perhaps is caused by the great difficulty I have in recalling any thing like a distinct form of any one of those great masses to my memory. Bless me I have scarce left room to say Good-B'ye.—

C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The letter from Clarkson to Hazlitt was probably about a portrait painted by H. about this time. On 15th July 1811 Hazlitt writes to Thos. Robinson (H. C. R.'s brother): "I am glad to hear that Mr. Clarkson's picture is thought like, and only wish that it were what it should be." This letter is endorsed by H. C. R.: "To T. R. about his portrait. So bad a one that it was never finished, and what was done was destroyed."']

172. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

*Friday, 19 Oct., 1810. E. I. Ho.*

DR. W.,

I forwarded the Letter which you sent to me, without opening it, to your Sister at Binfield. She has returned it to me, and begs me to tell you that she intends returning from B. on Monday or Tuesday next, when Priscilla leaves it, and that it was her earnest wish to spend another week with us in London, but she awaits another Letter from home to determine her. I can only say that she appeared so much pleased with London, and that she is so little likely to see it again for a long time, that if you can spare her, it will be almost a pity not. But doubtless she will have heard again from you, before I can get a reply to this Letter & what she next hears she says will be decisive. If wanted, she will set out immediately from London. Mary has been very ill which you have heard I suppose from the Montagues. She is very weak and low spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject & it goes to the Bottom. In particular I was pleased with your Translation of that Turgid Epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a Test. But what is the reason we have so few good Epitaphs after all?

A very striking instance of your position might be found in the Church yard of Ditton upon Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton upon Thames has been blessed by the residence of a Poet, who for Love or Money, I do not well know which, has dignified every grave stone for the last few years with bran new verses, all different, and

all ingenious, with the Author's name at the Bottom of each. The sweet Swan of Thames has artfully diversified his strains & his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice. Most justly perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug Usher at his desk, in the intervals of instruction levelling his pen. Of Death as it consists of dust and worms and mourners and uncertainty he had never thought, but the word death he had often seen separate & conjunct with other words, till he had learned to skill of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word God, in a Pulpit, and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a scull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the Sounding Board. [But the] epitaphs were trim and sprag & patent, & pleased the survivors of Thames Ditton above the old mumpsimus of Afflictions Sore.

To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent Feeling which dictated this Dirge when new, must have suffered something in passing thro' so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington Churchy'd (I think) an Epitaph to an Infant who died *Ætatis* 4 months, with this seasonable inscription appended, Honor thy Fath<sup>r</sup>. and Moth<sup>r</sup>. that thy days may be long in the Land &c.—Sincerely wishing your children better [*words cut out with signature*].

[Binfield, near Windsor, was the home of Dorothy Wordsworth's uncle, Dr. Cookson, Canon of Windsor.

'Unitarian Belsham.' Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), minister of the Gravel Pit Unitarian chapel at Hackney, mentioned again in Lamb's 'Letter to Southey' in 1823.

Priscilla Lloyd had married Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Master of Trinity, in 1804.

Wordsworth's 'Essay on Epitaphs' was printed in part in the *Friend*, 22nd February 1810.

Wordsworth lived to write an epitaph on Lamb, but it was too long to be used on a gravestone. A few lines are on the tablet in Edmonton church.

Lamb had begun his criticisms of churchyard epitaphs very early: Talfourd tells that, when quite a little boy, after reading a number of flattering inscriptions, he asked Mary Lamb: 'Where do the naughty people lie?']

## 173. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

13 Nov. 1810.

Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the Geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of their maps & call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water, like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imitation, but it goes against me a little *at first*. I have been *aquavorous* now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps & rheumatisms, and cold internally so that fire won't warm me, yet I bear all for virtues sake. Must I then leave you, Gin, Rum, Brandy, Aqua Vitæ—pleasant jolly fellows—Damn Temperance and them that first invented it, some Anti Noahite. Coleridge has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his Clock has not struck yet, meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the 2d to see where the 1st is gone, the 3d to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there's another coming, and a 5th to say he's not sure he's the last. William Henshaw is dead. He died yesterday, aged 56. It was but a twelvemonth or so back that his Father, an ancient Gunsmith & my Godfather, sounded me as to my willingness to be guardian to this William in case of his (the old man's) death. William had three times broke in business, twice in England, once in t'other Hemisphere. He returned from America a sot & hath liquidated all debts. What a hopeful ward I am rid of. *Ætatis* 56. I must have taken care of his morals, seen that he did not form imprudent connections, given my consent before he could have married &c. From all which the stroke of death hath relieved me. Mrs. Reynolds is the name of the Lady to whom I will remember you to-morrow. Farewell. Wish me strength to continue. I've been eating jugg'd Hare. The toast & water makes me quite sick.

C. LAMB.

[After the preceding letter Mary Lamb had been taken ill—but not, I think, mentally—and Dorothy Wordsworth's visit was cut short.

Coleridge, the *Friend* having ceased, had come to London with the Montagus in October to stay with them indefinitely at 55 Frith Street, Soho. But on the journey Montagu had inadvisedly repeated what he unjustifiably called a warning phrase of Wordsworth's concerning Coleridge's difficult habits as a guest—the word 'nuisance' being mentioned—and this had so plunged Coleridge in grief that he went to a hotel until Morgan found him and took him to his house at 7 Portland Place, Hammersmith. Montagu's indiscretion led to a quarrel between Coleridge and Wordsworth which was long in healing. This is no place in which to tell the story, which has small part in Lamb's life; but it led to one of the few letters from Coleridge to Lamb that have been preserved (see E. H. Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's *Letters*, page 586).

During this time Coleridge seems to have been much at Lamb's. On 14th November Robinson met him, for the first time, there: and on the next day they were both at a party there.

'I have been *aquavorous*.' Writing to Dorothy Wordsworth on 23rd December Crabb Robinson says that Lamb had abstained from alcohol and tobacco since Lord Mayor's Day.

'William Henshaw.' I know nothing more of this unfortunate man.]

#### 174. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 23rd November, 1810.]

We are in a pickle. Mary from her affectation of physiognomy has hired a stupid big country wench who looked honest, as she thought, and has been doing her work some days but without eating—eats no butter nor meat, but prefers cheese with her tea for breakfast—and now it comes out that she was ill when she came with lifting her mother about (who is now with God) when she was dying, and with riding up from Norfolk 4 days and nights in the waggon. She got advice yesterday, and took something which has made her bring up a quart of blood, and she now lies, a dead weight upon our humanity, in her bed, incapable of getting up, refusing to go into an hospital, having no body in town but a poor asthmatic dying Uncle, whose son lately married a drab who fills his house, and there is no where she can go, and she seems to have made up her mind to take her flight to heaven from our bed.—O God! O God! for the little wheelbarrow which trundled the Hunchback from door to door to try the various charities of different professions of Mankind!

Here's her Uncle just crawled up, he is far liker Death than she. O the Parish, the Parish, the hospital, the infirmary, the charnel house, these are places meet for such guests, not our quiet mansion where nothing but affluent plenty and literary ease should abound.—Howard's House, Howard's House, or where the Parylitic descended thro' the sky-light (what a God's Gift) to get at our Savior. In this perplexity such topics as Spanish papers and Monkhouses sink into comparative insignificance. What shall we do?—If she died, it were something: gladly would I pay the coffin maker and the bellman and searchers—O Christ.

C. L.

['The Hunchback.' In the *Arabian Nights*.

'Far liker Death.' A recollection of the line in the first version of *The Ancient Mariner*: 'And she is far liker Death than he.'

'The Paralytic.' See Mark ii.]

175. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Dated at end: 28th November 1810.]

DEAR HAZLITT,

I sent you on Saturday a Cobbet containing your reply to Edinb. Rev. which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbet to insert it so speedily; did you get it?—We have received your Pig and return you thanks, it will be drest in due form with appropriate sauce this day.—Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her, that is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen, she drinks nothing but water and never goes out, she does not even go to the Captain's. Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left Town, the night Miss W. came; her coming, and that damn'd infernal bitch Mrs. Godwin coming & staying so late that night, so overset her that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness which I thoroughly expected.—I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one in the house again with her, and that no one shall sleep with her not even for a night, for it is a very serious thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her, & therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs. Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the daytime, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in, owing to Miss Wordsw<sup>s</sup> coming, is not to be borne, & I had rather be dead than so alive. However at present owing to a regimen & medicines which Tuthill, who very kindly volunteer'd the care of her, has given her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harrassd by Company, who cannot or will not see how late hours & society teaze her.—

Poor Phillips had the cup dash'd out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when about ten days since one of the Council of the R. Society started for the Place himself, being a rich merchant who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday next. P. is very sore & miserable about it.—

Coleridge is in Town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the Courier against Cobbet & in favor of Paper Money.—

No news.—remember me kindly to Sara. I write from the office.—  
Yours ever

Wednesd<sup>y</sup>. 28 Nov 1810

C. LAMB.

I just open'd it to say the Pig upon proof hath turned out as good as

I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odor.—I find you have rec<sup>d</sup> the Cobbet, I think your Paper complete—

Mrs. Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of the Pig.—

[‘A Cobbet.’ This was Cobbett’s *Political Register* for 24th November 1810, containing Hazlitt’s letter upon ‘Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers,’ signed ‘The Author of a Reply to the *Essay on Population*.’ Hazlitt’s reply had been criticized in the *Edinburgh* for August, probably only just published.

The postscript contains Lamb’s first passage in praise of roast pig.]

#### 176. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: Probably *November or December 1810*.]

DEAR GODWIN,

I have found it for several reasons indispensable to my comfort, and to my sister’s, to have no visitors in the forenoon. If I cannot accomplish this I am determined to leave town.

I am extremely sorry to do anything in the slightest degree that may seem offensive to you or to Mrs. Godwin, but when a general rule is fixed on, you know how odious in a case of this sort it is to make exceptions; I assure you I have given up more than one friendship in stickling for this point. It would be unfair to those from whom I have parted with regret to make exceptions, which I would not do for them. Let me request you not to be offended, and to request Mrs. G. not to be offended, if I beg both your compliances with this wish. Your friendship is as dear to me as that of any person on earth, and if it were not for the necessity of keeping tranquillity at home, I would not seem so unreasonable.

If you were to see the agitation that my sister is in, between the fear of offending you and Mrs. G. and the difficulty of maintaining a system which she feels we must do to live without wretchedness, you would excuse this seeming strange request, which I send you with a trembling anxiety as to its reception with you, whom I would never offend. I rely on your goodness.

C. LAMB.

[I place next to this another undated letter to Godwin, but it may be much earlier in time.]

#### 177. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: ? *December 1810*.]

I repent. Can that God whom thy votaries say that thou hast demolished expect more? I did indite a splenetic letter, but did the



black Hypochondria never gripe *thy* heart, till thou hast taken a friend for an enemy? The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet leads me over four inched bridges, to course my own shadow for a traitor. There are certain positions of the moon, under which I counsel thee not to take anything written from this domicile as serious.

I rank thee with Alves, Latinè Helvetius, or any of his cursed crew? Thou art my friend, and henceforth my philosopher—thou shalt teach Distinction to the junior branch of my household, and Deception to the greyhaired Janitress at my door.

What! Are these atonements? Can Arcadians be brought upon knees, creeping and crouching?

Come, as Macbeth's drunken porter says, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock—seven times in a day shalt thou batter at my peace, and if I shut aught against thee, save the Temple of Janus, may Briareus, with his hundred hands, in each a brass knocker, lead me such a life.

C. LAMB.

('The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet.' *King Lear*, III. iv. 18.

We know that Mary Lamb had recovered by 20th December because Robinson records meeting her with her brother and Coleridge, 'by accident.'

If at this time and for the next two or three years there are few letters the reason may be either that the originals have disappeared or—what seems more likely—that Lamb was being very busy with work for Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*, for which he wrote not only such fantasies as the letter 'On the Inconveniences Resulting from Being Hanged,' in 1811, but the minutely-reasoned critical analytical studies of the genius of Hogarth, also in 1811, and the tragedies of Shakespeare in 1812.

If, however, there are few letters, we have Crabb Robinson's diary to keep us informed as to the little household. Thus on 8th January he was at the Lambs', and found Lamb unwell. It was then that Robinson was surprised by hearing Lamb describe Coleridge as a greater man than Wordsworth.<sup>1</sup>

#### 178. TO JOHN MORGAN

(*Fragment*)

[Dated at end: 8th March 1811.

There—don't read any further, because the Letter is not intended for you but for Coleridge, who might perhaps not have opened it directed to him *suo nomine*. It is to invite C. to Lady Jerningham's on Sunday. Her address is to be found within. We come to Hammer-smith notwithstanding on Sunday, and hope Mrs. M. will not think of getting us Green Peas or any such expensive luxuries. A plate of

plain Turtle, another of Turbot, with good roast Beef in the rear, and, as Alderman Curtis says, whoever can't make a dinner of that ought to be damn'd.

C. LAMB.

Friday night, 8 Mar., 1811.

[Robinson tells us that Mary Lamb was taken ill at 5 a.m. 9th March, and removed by Charles to an asylum at 7 a.m. Full details are given by Coleridge in a letter to Matilda Betham, written Thursday afternoon, 14th March. (See *House of Letters*, page 131.)

On 16th March 1811 Lamb called on Crabb Robinson and afterwards they went, with the Colliers, to Covent Garden to see *Cato* and *Bluebeard*. Mary Lamb was still away.

Mary Lamb's illness lasted until 7th May. On 15th May 1811 Crabb Robinson records a pleasant call on the Lambs, when Charles read aloud his version of the story of Prince Dorus, the long-nosed king. This version was published by Hodgkin for Godwin in 1811.

On 13th June 1811 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb and found John Lamb there. The evening was spent in a discussion of punning.

On 21st July Crabb Robinson found Lamb suffering from a bad eye caused by a fellow clerk, H. Wadd, throwing ink into it. It was of Wadd, whom, in a later letter, Lamb refers to as a 'sad shuffler,' that he wrote the epigram:

What Wadd knows, God knows,  
But God knows *what* Wadd knows.

On 3rd August Crabb Robinson was at Lamb's. 'He was serious and therefore very interesting.' During the evening he resented Coleridge being called 'poor Coleridge' and pitied.]

#### 179. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: ? 27th September 1811.]

DEAR MISS BETHAM,

I am very sorry, but I was pre-engaged for this evening when Eliza communicated the contents of your letter. She herself also is gone to Walworth to pass some days with Miss Hays—

G— forbid I should  
pass my days  
with Miss H—ys

but that is neither here nor there. We will both atone for this accident by calling upon you as early as possible.

I am setting out to engage Mr. Dyer to your Party, but what the issue of my adventure will be, cannot be known, till the wafer has closed up this note for ever.

Yours truly,

Friday.

C. LAMB.

[Mary Matilda Betham (1776-1852), to whom Lamb writes for the first time, was an author and miniature-painter who is first mentioned in the letter to Manning of 26th February 1808. Eliza was, I guess, Eliza Fenwick, the daughter, an actress.]

## 180. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

2 Oct. 1811.

DEAR HAZLITT,

I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born—

Delighted Fancy already sees him some future rich alderman or opulent merchant; painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours for amusement like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow Estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog when he grows up should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem Estate of course can only devolve on him, in case of your brother leaving no male issue.

Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper and a smoother head of hair, and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the Card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within Caudle-shot. C. LAMB.

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

[William Hazlitt's son, William Hazlitt, afterwards the Registrar, was born on 26th September 1811. He had been preceded by another boy, in 1809, who lived, however, only a few months.

'H. Bunbury.' Henry William Bunbury, the caricaturist and painter, and the husband of Goldsmith's friend, Catherine Horneck, the 'Jessamy Bride.' He died in 1811.

The Card-boys would be Lamb's Wednesday visitors.

The widow was Mrs. Stoddart.

A letter from Lamb to Charles Lloyd junior, belonging to this period, is now no more, in common with all but two of his letters, the remainder of which were destroyed by Lloyd's son, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd. Writing to Daniel Stuart on 13th October 1812 Wordsworth says: 'Lamb writes to Lloyd that Coleridge's play (Coleridge's *Remorse*) was accepted.'

We know from a letter to Rickman that Coleridge was at the Lambs' on 10th October 1811, and observed that Lamb was smoking too much.]

181. TO JOHN MORGAN

Early October 1811.

DEAR M.,

The dark November fogs are come, Night travelling with flambeaux is expensive; without, dangerous. Add to this, that the migrative Actress has not yet taken her flight, and in all birdish probability sets out to-morrow. Our dinner at Hammersmith must cool for another day. Where is the Lecturer, quasi lecturus? he has not been heard of at his own abode this fortnight. By his hostess's anxious enquiries I must suspect he has out-stay'd the stay-maker's patience. Meantime where are my Books?

Written in confusion from my Inn in the Temple, surrounded by mother, daughter, brother and dog of the Fenwick breed, who have been incommoding me night and day for a week. Mary has been staying at Capt. Burney's 3 or 4 days for quiet; I am in a [? pure] West Indian fever.

Can you understand these dark sayings?—Kind remembrance to Mr. M. and Miss B. How is thy nose? do styptics flourish?

Thine, without the advantage of solitude

C. LAMB.

I suppose you understand by the foregoing that we come to Hammersmith the Sunday after; not tomorrow.

[In spite of Lamb's reference to November fogs, which may merely have described their precociousness, I have dated this early October, because we know, from a letter in *The Fate of the Fenwicks*, that the Fenwicks were then staying at Lamb's; Eliza Fenwick, the mother, Eliza, the daughter, Orlando, the son, and a dog. Eliza the daughter, who had become an actress, was on the point of sailing to the West Indies. By the 13th she had gone.

The lecturer was Coleridge, now in the throes of preparing the course on Shakespeare and other poets, and staying in London, presumably at a stay-maker's, for that purpose.

Although there is no mention of the circumstance in Lamb's letters, Robert Lloyd died on 26th October of this year, 1811, and Lamb wrote a memorial notice of him in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Charles Lloyd, writing to Robert's widow, said of Lamb: 'If I loved him for nothing else, I should now love [him] for the affecting interest that he has taken in the memory of my dearest Brother and Friend.'

On 5th December 1811 Crabb Robinson met Coleridge at Lamb's; and on the 10th Mary Lamb dined with him, and later in the evening Lamb, Manning, and Mrs. Fenwick came in. Lamb talked very shrewdly about Shakespeare's tragedies.

On 15th December Robinson was at Lamb's, and Mrs. Godwin was of the party. On coming away she took Robinson into another room and reproached him angrily for not bearing anything from Godwin, but taking everything from Lamb.

On 17th January 1812 Crabb Robinson met, at Barron Field's, Lamb and Leigh Hunt, when the conversation turned on the transcendent merits of Coleridge, which Lamb, sober or tipsy, upheld.]

## 182. TO JOHN DYER COLLIER

[No date: Probably 1812.]

DEAR SIR,

Mrs. Collier has been kind enough to say that you would endeavour to procure a reporter's situation for W. Hazlitt. I went to consult him upon it last night, and he acceded very eagerly to the proposal, and requests me to say how very much obliged he feels to your kindness, and how glad he should be for its success. He is, indeed, at his wits' end for a livelihood; and, I should think, especially qualified for such an employment, from his singular facility in retaining all conversations at which he has been ever present. I think you may recommend him with confidence. I am sure I shall *myself* be obliged to you for your exertions, having a great regard for him.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Sunday morning.

[John Payne Collier, who prints this in his *Old Man's Diary*, adds: 'The result was that my father procured for Hazlitt the situation of a parliamentary reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*; but he did not retain it long, and as his talents were undoubted, Mr. Perry transferred to him the office of theatrical critic, a position which was subsequently held for several years by a person of much inferior talents.'

Crabb Robinson mentions in his *Diary* under the date 24th December 1812, that Hazlitt is in high spirits from his engagement with Perry as parliamentary reporter at four guineas a week.

On 30th December 1813 Crabb Robinson played a rubber of whist at Lamb's, and then went with Burney (father or son is not specified) to Rickman's, where they found Hazlitt. Robinson produced one of Chatterton's forgeries. In one manuscript there were seventeen different kinds of e's. 'Oh,' said Lamb (quoting Pope), 'that must have been written by one of the Mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease!'

On 28th May 1814 Crabb Robinson went with the Colliers and the Lambs to Dr. Aikin's.

On 3rd July 1814 Crabb Robinson took Lamb to Enfield, to his friend, Anthony Robinson's, and in the evening walked back. This excursion is interesting as, as far as we know, being Lamb's first acquaintance with the village that he was to like so much, and later to make his home in for several years.

With the next letter Lamb's last epistolary period may be said to begin.]

## 183. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 9th August 1814.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great Armful of Poetry which you have sent me, and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read. A day in heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Church yard. The only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time and not duly taken away again—the deaf man and the blind man—the Jacobite and the Hanoverian whom antipathies reconcile—the Scarron-entry of the rustivating parson upon his solitude—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this Best of Books upon the best subjects for partial naming.

That gorgeous Sunset is famous, I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card table where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequall'd set, but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified such as the prophets saw them, in that sunset—the wheel—the potter's clay—the wash pot—the wine press—the almond tree rod—the baskets of figs—the fourfold visaged head, the throne and him that sat thereon.

One feeling I was particularly struck with as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure,—the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming, properties of a country church just entered—a certain fragrance which it has—either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country—exactly what you have reduced into words but I am feeling I cannot. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument, in Harrow Church, (do you know it?) with its fine long Spire white as washd marble, to be seen by vantage of its high scite as far as Salisbury spire itself almost—

I shall select a day or two very shortly when I am coolest in brain to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for

it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me.

There is a deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or South country man entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it that by your system it was doubtful whether a Liver in Towns had a Soul to be Saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

Save for a late excursion to Harrow and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this Summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent all that was countryfy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanishd, the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there, booths and drinking places go all round it for a mile and half I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park.

Order after Order has been issued by L<sup>d</sup>. Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The vis unita of all the Publicans in London, Westminster, Marybone, and miles round is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has rais'd a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the Place is gone—that lake-like look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it—but something whispers to have confidence in nature and its revival—

at the coming of the *milder day*

These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious Pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths—a tent rather, 'O call it not a booth!'—erected by the public Spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras (the ale houses have all emigrated with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole Ale houses with all their Ale!) in company with some of the guards that had been in France and a fine French girl (habited like a Princess of Banditti) which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene, in H. Park, by Candlelight in open air, good tobacco, bottled stout, made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle, I almost fancied scars smarting and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds.

After all, the fireworks were splendid—the Rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in Space (like unbroke horses) till some of Newton's

calculations should fix them, but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em and the still finer showers of gloomy rain fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the Last Day, must be as hardened an Atheist as \* \* \* \* \*.

Again let me thank you for your present and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it (which I trust I shall often), and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

With kindest remembrances to you & household, we remain—yours sincerely

C. LAMB and sister.

9 Aug., 1814.

[Wordsworth had sent Lamb a copy of *The Excursion*, which had been published in July 1814. In connection with this letter Lamb's review of the poem in the *Quarterly* (see vol. 1 of my edition) should be read. Wordsworth's tales of the churchyard are in books vi and vii. The story of Margaret had been written in 1795. The 'sunset scene' (see letter of 19th September 1814) is at the end of book ii.

In August 1814 London was in a state of jubilation over the declaration of peace between England and France. Lord Sidmouth, late Mr. Addington, the Home Secretary, known as 'The Doctor,' was one of Lamb's butts in his political epigrams.

'At the coming of the milder day.' From Wordsworth's *Hart-leap Well*.  
'\* \* \* \* \*,' I assume these six stars to stand for Godwin.]

184. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

13 August, 1814.

DEAR RESUSCITATE,

There comes to you by the vehicle from Lad Lane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. Southey towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Dr., as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike. It was the *Well-bred Scholar*,—a book with which it seems the Dr. laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations. Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from 'The Life of Savage,' make up a prettyish system of morality and the Belles Lettres, which Mr. Mylne, a Schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned. The Doctor had no sooner discovered



his error than he despatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note seemeth to deny any knowledge of the *Well-bred Scholar*; false modesty surely and a blush misplaced; for, what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving; but so, when a child I remember blushing, being caught on my knees to my maker, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action; *now* I rather love such things to be seen.

Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Midland Circuit,—a short term, but to him, as to many young Lawyers, a long vacation sufficiently dreary. I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books? Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time: his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last,—I know they will,—pure golden pippin. His address is at T. Robinson's, Bury, and if on Circuit, to be forwarded immediately—such my peremptory superscription. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England, your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away; if it be, he is a Sloe, and no true-hearted crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German Conjuror which you speak of, '*Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis*,' I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. Morgan and Miss Brent, in London-Street,—(by that token we had raw rabbits for supper, and Miss Brent prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water after supper, which is not my habit,)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their Packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, Morgan and his cos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

One piece of news I know will give you pleasure—Rickman is made a Clerk to the House of Commons, £2000 a year with greater *expectat<sup>na</sup>*—but that is not the news—but it is that poor card-playing Phillips, that has felt himself for so many years the outcast of Fortune, which feeling pervaded his very intellect, till it made the destiny it

feared, withering his hopes in the great and little games of life—by favor of the single star that ever shone upon him since his birth, has strangely stepped into Rickman's Secretaryship—sword, bag, House and all—from a hopeless £100 a year eaten up beforehand with desperate debts, to a clear £400 or £500—it almost reconciles me to the belief of a moral government of the world—the man stares and gapes and seems to be always wondering at what has befallen him—he tries to be eager at Cribbage, but alas! the source of that Interest is dried up for ever, he no longer plays for his next day's meal, or to determine whether he shall have a half dinner or a whole dinner, whether he shall buy a pair of black silk stockings, or wax his old ones a week or two longer, the poor man's relish of a Trump, the Four Honors, is gone—and I do not know whether if we could get at the bottom of things whether poor star-doomed Phillips with his hair staring with despair was not a happier being than the sleek well combed oily-pated Secretary that has succeeded. The gift is, however, clogged with one stipulation, that the Secretary is to remain a Single Man. Here I smell Rickman. Thus are gone at once all Phillips' matrimonial dreams. Those verses which he wrote himself, and those which a superior pen (with modesty let me speak as I name no names) endited for him to Elisa, Amelia &c.—for Phillips was a wife-hunting, probably from the circumstance of his having formed an extreme rash connection in early life which paved the way to all his after misfortunes, but there is an obstinacy in human nature which such accidents only serve to whet on to try again. Pleasure thus at two entrances quite shut out—I hardly know how to determine of Phillips's result of happiness. He appears satisfied, but never those bursts of gaiety, those moment-rules from the Cave of Despondency, that used to make his face shine and shew the lines which care had marked in it. I would bet an even wager he marries secretly, the Speaker finds it out, and he is reverted to his old Liberty and a hundred pounds a year—these are but speculations—I can think of no other news.

I am going to eat Turbot, Turtle, Venison, marrow pudding—cold punch, claret, madeira,—at our annual feast at half-past four this day. Mary has ordered the bolt to my bedroom door inside to be taken off, and a practicable latch to be put on, that I may not bar myself in and be suffocated by my neckcloth, so we have taken all precautions, three watchmen are engaged to carry the body upstairs—Pray for me. They keep bothering me, (I'm at office), and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonicon should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some Book-proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best.

C. LAMB.

[Since Lamb's last letter to him (30th October 1809) Coleridge had done very little. The *Friend* had been given up; he had made his London home with the Morgans; had delivered the lectures on Shakespeare and contributed to the *Courier*; *Remorse* had been produced with Lamb's prologue, 23rd January 1813; the quarrel with Wordsworth had been to some extent healed; he had sold his German books; and the opium-habit was growing on him. He was now at Bristol, living with Joseph Wade, and meditating a great work on Christianity which Cottle was to print, and which ultimately became the *Biographia Literaria*.

The term 'Resuscitate' may refer to one of Coleridge's frequent threats of dying.

Dr. Henry Herbert Southey (1783-1865) was brother of the poet. He had just settled in London.

'Mylne' was William Milne, author of *The Well-bred Scholar*, 1794.

Crabb Robinson does not mention Coleridge's letter, nor make any reference to it, in his *Diary*. He went to France in August after circuit.

The 'life of the German conjuror.' There were several Coleruses. John Colerus of Amsterdam wrote a *Life of Spinoza*. Lamb may have meant this. John Colerus of Berlin invented a perpetual calendar and John Jacob Colerus examined Platonic doctrine. There are still others.

The Morgans had moved to Ashley, near Box. Miss Brent was Mrs. Morgan's sister.

Phillips we have met: an old dependant of Rickman and friend of the Burneys. It is a calamity that Lamb's amatory efforts for this later Miles Standish do not exist.

'Our annual feast.' The annual dinner of the India House clerks.

'The Architectonicon.' Lamb refers possibly to some great projected work of Coleridge's. Goethe may be referred to.]

## 185. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

26th August, 1814.

Let the hungry soul rejoice: there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of 'Remorse' on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the 'Rokebys' and the 'Laras,' and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper—whereas thy 'Wallenstein' and thy 'Remorse' are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel

(which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

Thy caterer Price was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee, like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence-Pountney-Lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Alemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if 'Faust' be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for Proclus. It is a kind of book which when one meets with it one shuts the lid faster than one opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or Plotinus, 205-270 A.D., Neo-platonist, or Saint Augustine's 'City of God.' So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, 'well used,' had been the 'Pledge of Immortality.' Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such 'a Hare' as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication; and may his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by Reviewers, and the devil jug him! So I think I have answered all the questions except about Morgan's cos-lettuces. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner—a steady contemplative browsing on them—didst never take note of it? Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? So you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity. CHARLES LAMB.

[Charles Aders we shall meet. Crabius was, of course, Crabb Robinson. Lamb would have read Madame de Stael's *De l'Allemagne* in Murray's three-volume edition, translator not named, 1813.

'Bishop Bruno' probably was the medieval bishop whose legend Southey narrated in a ballad.

I cannot place the 'Hare.' It seems hardly likely it was Julius Charles Hare, who was then only a youth of nineteen, although he afterwards came to know Coleridge.

'Jimmy Boyer.' The Rev. James Boyer, head master of Christ's Hospital in Lamb and Coleridge's day, died in July or August 1814. His living, the richest in the hospital's gift, was that of Colne Engaine, which passed to the Rev. Arthur William Trollope, head master of Christ's Hospital until 1826. Boyer had been a Draconian, and Coleridge and he had had passages, but in the main Coleridge's testimony to him is favourable and kindly (see Lamb's Christ's Hospital essay in *Elia* and, even better, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.)]

## 186. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. 19th September. 1814.]

MY DEAR W.,

I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is. . . . Owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H. owing to bad peace speculations in the Calico market (I write this to W. W., Esq. Collector of Stamp duties for the conjoint northern counties, not to W. W. Poet) I go back, and have for this many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlit has uncivilly kept, only 2 days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday) that the book was like a Mount<sup>n</sup>. Landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice. I perceived beauty dizzily. Now what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half day or hour even till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get 4 weeks absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin I will most gladly do what you require, tho' I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a 'work' methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is to let me know from Southey, if that will be time

enough for the 'Quarterly,' i.e. suppose it done in 3 weeks from this date (19 Sept.): if not it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you and feels highly grateful for your Patent of Nobility, and acknowledges the author of *Excursion* as the legitimate Fountain of Honor. We both agree, that to our feeling Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry! the fact is explicable, but how few to whom it could have been rendered explicit!

The unlucky reason of the detention of *Excursion* was, Hazlitt and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about 6 months ago, since which the union hath snapt, but M. Burney borrowd it for him and after reiterated messages I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigor in them, particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen*, but I forget the Passage, but the whole wore a slovenly air of dispatch and disrespect. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire, I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech. That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish *Candide*. I know I tried to get thro' it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the Dullness. Now, I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill bakd dinner, fast gobbled up, to set me off to office again after working there till near four. O Christ! how I wish I were a rich man, even tho' I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting thro' that Needles eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos, are you a Xtian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?

I find I miscalld that celestial splendor of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shews my inaccuracy of head.

Do pray indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am asham'd to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the 1st week in Octo<sup>r</sup>. God send I may not be disappointed in that!

Coleridge swore in letter to me he would review *Exc<sup>n</sup>* in the Quarterly. Therefore, tho' *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do anything, *when* done, I must know of him if he has anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclams.

I keep writing on, knowing the Postage is no more for much writing, else so faggd & disjointed I am with damnd India house work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on '*Excursion*.' I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed Book.

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! From some return'd English I hear that not such a thing as a counting house is to be seen in her streets, scarce a desk—Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its grapple merchants, as Drayton hath it, 'born to be the curse of this brave isle.' I invoke this not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of Tune. Better harmonies await you.

C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth had been appointed in 1813 Distributor of Stamps for the county of Westmorland. Lamb is writing again about *The Excursion*, which at the instigation of Southey, to whom Wordsworth had made the suggestion, he is to review for the *Quarterly*.

Hazlitt reviewed *The Excursion*—from Lamb's copy, which in itself was a cause of grievance—in the *Examiner*, in three numbers, 21st, 28th August, and 2nd October. Wordsworth had described *Candide*, in book II, as the 'dull product of a scoffer's pen,' and Hazlitt criticized the derogatory epithet.

'Are you a Xtian?' Referring to the sentiments of the Wanderer and the Pastor—two characters of *The Excursion*. Thomas Allsop, whom we are soon to meet, records that he 'once wrote to Wordsworth to inquire if he was really a Christian. He replied: "When I am a good man then I am a Christian."'

'A sunset.' See preceding letter to Wordsworth.]

187. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

October 29 1814.

DEAR S.,

I have this day deposited with Mr. G. Bedf<sup>d</sup>. the Essay you suggested to me. I am afraid it is wretchedly inadequate. Who can cram into a strait coop of a review any serious idea of such a vast & magnificent poem as *Excurs<sup>n</sup>*?

I am myself, too, peculiarly unfit from constitutional causes & want of time. However, it is gone.—

I have 9 or 10 days of my holy days left, but the rains are come.

Kind rememb<sup>s</sup> to Mrs. S. & sisters.

Yours truly

C. L.

[Southey had asked Lamb to review Wordsworth's poem *The Excursion* for the *Quarterly*, then edited by William Gifford. Grosvenor Bedford was a friend of Southey. Later letters deal with this matter.]

## 188. TO LEIGH HUNT (?)

[No date: 1814.]

DEAR H.

I understand you have got (or had) a snivelling methodistical adulteration of my Essay on Drunkenness. I wish very much to see it, to see how far Mr. Basil Montagu's Philanthropical Scoundrels have gone to make me a Sneak. There certainly was no crying 'Peccavi' in the 1st Draught.

Yours, though I seldom see you,

CH. LAMB.

[This letter of Lamb's, which I take to be written to Hunt rather than Hazlitt, refers to the second appearance of the *Confessions* in Basil Montagu's collection of arguments in favour of abstinence, *Some Enquiries into the Effect of Fermented Liquors*, 1814.

The first appearance of Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard' paper was in a quarterly magazine entitled *The Philanthropist; or, Repository for Hints and Suggestions calculated to promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man*, vol. III, No. IX, 1813. It was there unsigned and addressed 'To the Editor of the *Philanthropist*.' The editor of this magazine was William Allen (1770-1843), the Quaker, and his chief associate was James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill. Lamb's friend, Basil Montagu (1770-1851), was among the contributors; and another prominent name was that of Benjamin Meggot Forster (1764-1829), who, like Montagu, opposed capital punishment and was zealous in the cause of chimney-sweepers.

In its original *Philanthropist* form the essay differs from its later appearances. Concerning the differences I should like to quote from an interesting article by the late Thomas Hutchinson in the *Athenæum* of 16th August 1902:

The text of the 'Confessions,' as it stands in the *Philanthropist*, bears evident traces of Mill's editorial hand; the verbal changes smack of those precise and literal modes of thought and expression which Lamb found so uncongenial in the Scotsman. 'They seemed to have something noble *about* them,' writes Lamb of the friends of 1801. 'But moral qualities are not external to us, they are resident *in* us,' objects Mill; and so 'about' is struck out and 'in' substituted. 'Avoid the bottle as you would fly your greatest destruction,' says Lamb. 'But,' interposes the precisian, 'the idea of destruction does not admit of *more* or *less*; besides, "to fly" is properly a verb intransitive'—and thus the sentence is rewritten: '*. . . fly from certain destruction.*' 'The pain of the self-denial is *all one*'—'*is equal,*' substitutes the Scot. 'I scarce knew what it was to *ail anything*'—'to have an ailment,' corrects the lover of plain words; and so on. Of the sixth paragraph of the essay only the opening sentence ('Why should I hesitate,' etc.) is suffered to stand. The rest is cancelled—doubtless as at variance with Utilitarian views. Again, the close of the fourteenth paragraph ('But he is too hard for us,' etc., onwards) is struck out—either by Mill, as too broadly implying the existence of the 'muckle deil,' or by Allen, as too flippant an allusion to that fearsome personage. Lastly, the second paragraph is wanting and the third reduced by half, the conclusion (from 'Trample not,' etc., on), in which the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is referred to, being omitted.



The curious thing is that Montagu should have been able to take away the original MS. from the *Philanthropist* office. As a matter of fact, the version that is nearest to the 'Confessions' as Lamb wrote them is the second.]

## 189. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 28th December 1814.]

DEAR W.,

Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of the *Excursion* does *toto cælo* differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But with a little explanation you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks Tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common moderate self enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more in *rerum naturâ* than a flying horse or a Gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the act of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again the person who makes his smile to be *heard*, is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac taylor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light headedness for light heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me.—Enough of tailors.—

The 'scapes' of the great god Pan who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas. W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Loft wrote to M. M. Phillips (now Sir Richard) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article by Pan, signed H. and adding 'I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.' Hylas has [? had] put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Loft (unfounded as

we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being 'good to all that wander in that perilous flood.' One J. Scott (I know no more) is edit<sup>r</sup>. of *Champ<sup>n</sup>*.

Where is Coleridge?

That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long as it will seem to have done from its postponement. I write with great difficulty and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off Gin. I hope you will see good will in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all Panegyrick; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am in mind distant from you or your Poem, but that both are close to me among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts and determined upon not giving one that had been in the Examiner, for Extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allow<sup>ce</sup>. of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of St. W. Irthing and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the Poem. H. had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first Review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Giffard and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad.

C. LAMB

[Lamb seems to have sent Wordsworth a copy of the *Champion* containing his essay, signed Burton, Junior, 'On the Melancholy of Tailors.' Wordsworth's letter of reply, containing the examples of other tailors, is no longer in existence. 'A greater hell' is a pun: the receptacle into which tailors throw scraps is called a hell. See Lamb's *Satan in Search of a Wife* and notes (vol. IV of my edition of Lamb's Works) for more on this topic.

'W. H.' Hazlitt: referring again to his review of *The Excursion* in the *Examiner*.

'The melancholy Jew.' Mr. Lyon Levy, a diamond merchant, who jumped off the Monument commemorating the Fire of London, on 18th January 1810.

'The "scapes" of the great god Pan.' A reference to Hazlitt's flirtation with a farmer's daughter in the Lake country, ending almost in immersion. Hylas, seeking for water with a pitcher, so enraptured the nymphs of the river with his beauty that they drew him in. Mr. Ernest de Séincourt's *Dorothy Wordsworth* has more details.

Capell Lofft (1751-1824) was a lawyer and philanthropist of independent means who threw himself into many popular discussions and knew many literary men. He was the patron of Robert Bloomfield. Lamb was amused

by him, but annoyed that his initials were also C. L. 'M. M. Phillips'—for *Monthly Magazine*, which Phillips published.

'One J. Scott.' John Scott, editor of the *Champion*, and later, in 1820, of the *London Magazine*. Killed in a duel with Lockhart's friend Christie, 16th February 1821.

'Where is Coleridge?' Coleridge was now at Calne, in Wiltshire, with the Morgans. He was being treated for the drug habit by a Dr. Page.

'That Review.' Lamb's review of *The Excursion*, which, although the *Quarterly* that contains it is dated October 1814, must have been delayed until the end of the year. The episode of Sir W. Irthing (really Sir Alfred Irthing) is in book vii. Lamb's foreboding as to Gifford's action was only too well justified, as we shall see.

'Mary keeps very bad.' Mary Lamb had been taken ill some time between 11th and 19th December, from overtiring herself on an article on needle-work; she did not recover until February 1815.]

## 190. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. ? Early January 1815.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the *Quarterly* is a spurious one which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palm'd upon it for mine. I never felt more vexed in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it out of spite at me because he once suffered me to be called a lunatic in his *Thing*. The *language* he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was in point of composition the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ, and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm if it had any is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one. I have not the cursed alteration by me, I shall never look at it again, but for a specimen I remember I had said the Poet of the *Excurs<sup>n</sup>*. 'walks thro' common forests as thro' some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher love-lays.' It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) 'but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him'—that is one I remember. But that would have been little, putting his damnd Shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) in stead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend—for I reckon myself a dab at *Prose*—verse I leave to my betters—God help them, if they are

to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter. I have read 'It won't do.' But worse than altering words, he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your 'scheme of harmonies,' as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the Extracts as if they came in as a part of the text, naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as without conjuration no man could tell what I was driving it [? at]. A proof of it you may see (tho' not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words: I had spoken something about 'natural methodism—' and after follows 'and therefore the tale of Margaret sh<sup>d</sup>. have been postponed' (I forget my words, or his words): now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word altered makes one, but indeed of this Review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew, but for the *writing part* of it, I was fully satisfied. I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is of course the worse for their having been there, the eyes are pulled out and the bleeding sockets are left. I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labors of years turn'd into contempt by scoundrels.

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many) every warm expression, there was nothing else, is vulgarised and frozen—but if they catch me in their camps again let them spitchcock me. They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford I suppose never wa[i]ved a right he had since he commenced author. God confound him and all caitiffs.

C. L.

[For the full understanding of this letter it is necessary to read Lamb's review (see vol. i of my edition of Lamb's *Works*).

William Gifford (1756-1826), editor of the *Quarterly*, had been a shoemaker's apprentice. Lamb calls him Mr. Baviad Gifford on account of his

satires. *The Baviad* and *The Maviad*, against the Della Cruscan school of poetry, of which Robert Merry had been the principal member. Some of Lamb's grudge against Gifford, which was of old standing (see notes to Lamb's review), was repaid in his sonnet *St. Crispin to Mr. Gifford* (in vol. iv of my edition of Lamb's Works). Gifford's connection with Canning, in the *Anti-Jacobin*, could not have improved his position with Lamb.

'I have read "It won't do."' A reference to the review of *The Excursion* in the *Edinburgh* for November, by Jeffrey, beginning 'This will never do.'

On 23rd January 1815 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb, and found him very unhappy, both from loneliness and office harassments.]

## 191. TO MR. SARGUS

[Dated at end: 23rd February 1815.]

MR SARGUS,

This is to give you notice that I have parted with the Cottage to Mr. Grig Jun<sup>r</sup>. to whom you will pay rent from Michaelmas last. The rent that was due at Michaelmas I do not wish you to pay me. I forgive it you as you may have been at some expences in repairs.

Yours

CH. LAMB.

Inner Temple Lane, London,

23 Feb., 1815.

[In 1812 Lamb had inherited, through his godfather, Francis Fielde, who is mentioned in the *Elia* essay 'My First Play,' a property called Button Snap, near Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire, consisting of a small cottage and about an acre of ground. In 1815 he sold it for £50, and the foregoing letter is an intimation of the transaction to his tenant. The purchaser, however, was not a Mr. Grig, but a Mr. Greg (see notes to 'My First Play' in vol. ii of my edition of Lamb's Works). The cottage is now a national monument, being in the care of the Royal Society of Arts.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The original letter was copied for me by Mrs. Greg, of "Coles," Buntingford, Herts. Mr. Sargus was plainly an illiterate labourer, for under Lamb's letter is written: "Read to Mr. Sargus, 27 April 1815 by me. Wm. Enever, April 27th."' ]

## 192. TO JOSEPH HUME

[No date.]

'Bis dat qui dat cito'

I hate the pedantry of expressing that in another language which we have sufficient terms for in our own. So in plain English I very much wish you to give your vote to-morrow at Clerkenwell, instead of

Saturday. It would clear up the brows of my favourite candidate, and stagger the hands of the opposite party. It commences at nine. How easy, as you come from Kensington (*à propos*, how is your excellent family?) to turn down Bloomsbury, through Leather Lane (avoiding Lay Stall St. for the disagreeableness of the name). Why, it brings you in four minutes and a half to the spot renowned on northern milestones, 'where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.' There will be good cheer ready for every independent freeholder; where you see a green flag hang out go boldly in, call for ham, or beef, or what you please, and a mug of Meux's Best. How much more gentleman-like to come in the front of the battle, openly avowing one's sentiments, than to lag in on the last day, when the adversary is dejected, spiritless, laid low. Have the first cut at them. By Saturday you'll cut into the mutton. I'd go cheerfully myself, but I am no freeholder (*Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium*), but I sold it for £50. If they'd accept a copy-holder, we clerks are naturally *copy-holders*.

By the way, get Mrs. Hume, or that agreeable Amelia or Caroline, to stick a bit of green in your hat. Nothing daunts the adversary more than to wear the colours of your party. Stick it in cockade-like. It has a martial, and by no means disagreeable effect.

Go, my dear freeholder, and if any chance calls you out of this transitory scene earlier than expected, the coroner shall sit lightly on your corpse. He shall not too anxiously enquire into the circumstances of blood found upon your razor. That might happen to any gentleman in shaving. Nor into your having been heard to express a contempt of life, or for scolding Louisa for what Julia did, and other trifling incoherencies.

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[*'Bis dat'*: He gives twice who gives quickly.

*'Lay Stall St.'* This street, which is still found in Clerkenwell, was, of course, named from one of the laystalls or public middens which were a feature of London when sanitation was in its infancy.

*'Where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.'* Hicks's Hall, the old Sessions House of the County of Middlesex, stood in St. John Street, Clerkenwell, until its demolition in 1782, when the justices removed to the new Sessions House on Clerkenwell Green. The milestones on the Great North Road, which had long been measured from Hicks's Hall, were reinscribed '— Miles from the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.' Thus Hicks's Hall remained a household word long after it had ceased to exist. The adventures of Jedediah Jones in search of 'the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood' are amusingly set forth in Knight's *London*, vol. 1, pages 242-4.

*'Fuimus Troes . . .':* No more are we Trojans; Troy is no more. Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 325.

I append a letter with no date, which may come here.

## 193. TO MRS. HUME (?)

[No date.]

DEAR MRS. H.,

Sally who brings this with herself back has given every possible satisfaction in doing her work, etc., but the fact is the poor girl is oppressed with a ladylike melancholy, and cannot bear to be so much alone, as she necessarily must be in our kitchen, which to say the truth is damn'd solitary, where she can see nothing and converse with nothing and not even look out of window. The consequence is she has been caught shedding tears all day long, and her own comfort has made it indispensable to send her home. Your cheerful noisy children-crowded house has made her feel the change so much the more.

Our late servant always complained of the *want of children*, which she had been used to in her last place. One man's meat is another man's poison, as they say. However, we are eternally obliged to you, as much as if Sally could have staid. We have got an old woman coming, who is too stupid to know when she is alone and when she is not.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB, for self and sister.

Have you heard from . . . . .

[I take it that Mrs. H. is Mrs. Hume, because Hume had a large family. It was of him, in his paternal light, that Lamb said: 'One fool makes many.']

## 194. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. partly illegible. 7th April 1815.]

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest Loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to *Dorothea*. Will none of you ever be in London again?

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a Character in Antithet. manner which I do not know why you left out; the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it in my mind less complete; and one admirable line gone (or something come in stead of it) 'the stone-chat and the glancing sand-piper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have

had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice. I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the malicious will take it to himself. Damn 'em; if you give 'em an inch &c. The preface is noble and such as you should write: I wish I could set my name to it—Imprimatur—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a doorkeeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowledge, the four yew trees and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—'Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow'—It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of—it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. Laodamia is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation. Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters without naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture collector, has picked up an undoubted picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson Editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way which comes not every day. The Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is that your Power of Music reminded me of his poem of the balad singer in the Seven Dials. Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A. B. C., which after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's *Principia*. I was lately fatiguing myself with going thro' a volume of fine words by L<sup>d</sup>. *Thurlow*—excellent words, and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regale—but what an aching vacuum of matter; I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elisabeth poets; from thence I turned to V. Bourne—what a sweet



unpretending pretty-mannered *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing, his diction all Latin and his thoughts all English. Bless him, Latin wasn't good enough for him, why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in.

I am almost sorry that you printed Extracts from those first Poems, or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do all together. Besides they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week—these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading.

We were glad to see the poems by a female friend. The one of the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better-instructed. As it is, Expect a formal criticism on the Poems of your female friend, and she must expect it.

I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged and like to be. On Friday I was at office from 10 in the morning (two hours dinner except) to 11 at night, last night till 9. My business and office business in general has increased so. I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till 4—and do not keep a holyday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red letter days, and some fine days besides which I used to dub Nature's holydays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life I may reckon two thirds as dead, for Time that a man may call his own is his Life, and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours, stains Sunday with workday contemplations—this is Sunday, and the headache I have is part late hours at work the 2 preceding nights and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort—

To them each evening had its glittering star  
And every Sabbath day its golden sun—

To such straits am I driven for the Life of life, Time—O that from that superfluity of Holyday leisure my youth wasted 'Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.—' N.B. I have left off spirituous liquors for 4 or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting. Farewell, dear Wordsworth.

[Wordsworth had just brought out, with Longman, his *Poems . . . including Lyrical Ballads and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author*, 1815, in two volumes. The *Character in the Antithetical Manner* was omitted from all editions of Wordsworth's poems between 1800 and 1836. In the 1800 version of *Rural Architecture* there had been these last lines, expunged in the editions of 1805 and 1815, but restored with a slight alteration in later editions:

—Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works  
In Paris and London, 'mong Christians or Turks,  
Spirits busy to do and undo:  
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag,  
—Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag;  
And I'll build up a Giant with you.

In the original form of the *Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree* there had been these lines:

His only visitants a straggling sheep,  
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper.

Wordsworth had altered them to:

His only visitants a straggling sheep,  
The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless Bird,  
Piping along the margin of the lake.

In the 1820 edition Wordsworth put back the original form.

'Those scoundrels.' Principally the critic of the *Edinburgh*, Jeffrey, but Wordsworth's assailants generally.

'That substitution of a shell.' In the original draft of *The Blind Highland Boy* the adventurous voyage was made in

A Household Tub, like one of those  
Which women use to wash their clothes.

In the new version the vessel was a turtle's shell

'The preface.' Wordsworth quotes from Lamb's essay in the *Reflector* on the genius of Hogarth, referring to the passage as 'the language of one of my most esteemed Friends.' It is Lamb's description of Imagination as that which 'draws all things to one, which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect.'

'Picture of Milton.' This portrait is now the property of the New York Public Library.

'V. Bourne.' The Rev. Vincent Bourne (1695-1747), a master at Westminster. Lamb afterwards translated some of Bourne's *Poemata*, 1734, and, in an enlarged edition, 1743, and wrote critically of them in the *Englishman's Magazine* in 1831.

'Ld. Thurlow.' But see letter to Bernard Barton of 5th December 1828, and the *Elia* essay on 'Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney,' 1823.

'Extracts from those first Poems.' Wordsworth included extracts from juvenile pieces, which had been first published in his *Descriptive Sketches*, 1793.

'A female friend.' Dorothy Wordsworth. The three poems were *Address to a Child* (beginning, 'What way does the Wind come?'), *The Mother's Return*, and *The Cottage to her Infant*.

\*To them each evening had its glittering star . . . ' *The Excursion*, book v. 'Age might but take some hours . . . ' From Wordsworth's latest poem about the small celandine, 1804:

Age might but take the things Youth needed not.]

## 195. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 28th April 1815.]

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write in formâ—

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgm<sup>ts</sup>. for them in more than one short letter. The Night Piece to which you refer me I meant fully to have noticed, but the fact is I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can,—talk about Vincent Bourne or any casual image instead of that which I had meditated—by the way, I must look out V. B. for you.—So I had meant to have mentioned Yarrow Visited, with that stanza, 'But thou that didst appear so fair—' than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry—yet the poem on the whole seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which in what preceded it you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined in the most delicate manner to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last—this has all fine, except perhaps that *that* of 'studious ease and generous cares' has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. The farmer of Tilsbury vale is a charming counter part to poor Susan, with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path which is so fine in the Old Thief and the boy by his side, which always brings *water* into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition. Susan stood for the representative of poor Rus in Urbe. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten. 'Fast volumes of vapour' &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop and contemplating the whirling phenomenon thro' blurred optics; but to term her a poor outcast seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away,—but how I can be brought in *felo de omitendo* for that Ending to the boy builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than

that 'Light hearted boys, I will build up a giant with you.' It comes naturally with a warm holyday and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer Amulet that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a Maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a maying. —*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the Pun? Young Romilly is divine, the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other Loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial in Cordelia, and by implication for the fatherly too in Lear's resentment—he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat and flattering—what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good. Apropos—when I first opened upon the just mentioned poem, in a careless tone I said to Mary as if putting a riddle 'What is good for a bootless bean?' to which with infinite presence of mind (as the jest book has it) she answered, a 'shoeless pea.' It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the 2d I make—you distinguish well in your old preface between the verses of Dr. Johnson of the man in the Strand, and that from the babes of the wood. I was thinking whether taking your own glorious lines—

And for the love was in her soul  
For the youthful Romilly—

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old Balads, and just altering it to—

And from the great respect she felt  
For Sir Samuel Romilly—

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression and poetic feeling nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life, if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a Spiritual taste of that White Doe you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, i.e. printed. All things read raw to me in MS.—to compare magna parvis, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the Supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by Imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene beastly Peter Pindar in a dispute on Milton say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon

one thing more than another it was in knowing what good verse was. Who lookd over your proof sheets, and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brothers picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half hour at a time. Yet tho' I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of petit (or petite, how do you spell it) querulousness about. Yet hang it, now I remember better, there is not—it is calm, melancholy, and poetical.

One of the copies you sent had precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of 2d vol. with a sheet of 1st. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectifyd. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading 'no thoroughfare.' Robinson's is entire; he is gone to Bury his father.

I wish you would write more criticism, about Spenser &c. I think I could say something about him myself—but Lord bless me—these 'merchants and their spicy drugs' which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I 'engross,' when I should pen a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffick, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization and wealth and amity and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe—and rot the very firs of the forest that look so romantic alive, and die into desks. Vale.

Yours dear W. and all yours'

C. LAMB.

[*Added at foot of the first page:*] N.B. Dont read that Q. Review—I will never look into another.

['Felo de omittendo.' See the preceding letter, where Lamb remonstrated with Wordsworth for omitting the last lines from *Rural Architecture*. Wordsworth seems to have charged Lamb with the criticism that decided their removal.

'The Pun.' Canon Ainger pointed out that Hood, in his *Ode to Melancholy*, makes the same pun very happily:

Like the sweet blossoms of the May,  
Whose fragrance ends in must.

'Young Romilly.' In *The Force of Prayer*, which opens with the question:

What is good for a bootless bene?

Later Mary Lamb made another joke, when at Munden's farewell performance she said, 'Sic transit gloria Munden!'

The stanzas from which Lamb quotes run:

'What is good for a bootless bene?'  
The Falconer to the Lady said;  
And she made answer 'Endless sorrow!'  
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,  
And from the look of the Falconer's eye  
And from the love which was in her soul  
For her youthful Romilly.

Sir Samuel Romilly (1757-1818), the lawyer and law reformer, was the great opponent of capital punishment for small offences.

In the preface to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, etc., Wordsworth had quoted Dr. Johnson's lines in parody of a poor ballad:

I put my hat upon my head  
And walked into the Strand,  
And there I met another man  
Whose hat was in his hand.

—contrasting them with these lines from *The Babes in the Wood*:

These pretty Babes with hand in hand  
Went wandering up and down;  
But never more they saw the Man  
Approaching from the Town.

'Peter Pindar.' John Wolcot (1738-1819), whom Lamb had met at Henry Rogers's, brother of the poet.]

#### 196. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

London, 6th May 1815.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have received from Longman a copy of 'Roderick,' with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the 'Excursion,' Wordsworth's two last vols., and now 'Roderick,' have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccahee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. 'Kehama' is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in 'Roderick;' my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and fathoms; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against omnipotences, such disturbances

of faith to the centre. The more potent the more painful the spell. Jove and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter. I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of 'Kehama,' not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling.

But 'Roderick' is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the 'Joan of Arc.' It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than 'Madoc.' I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travel, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it—no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on 1st and 2nd readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of Palayo's family first discovered,—his being made king—'For acclamation one form must serve, *more solemn for the breach of old observances.*' Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

Towards the troop he spread his arms,  
As if the expanded soul diffused itself,  
And carried to all spirits *with the act*  
Its affluent inspiration.

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can no where be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent, but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's 'Julian.' I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of

him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine Poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again; but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em, one of the serpent Penance, is serious enough, now I think on't.

Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whylear.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day-hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

The next Present I look for is the 'White Doe.' Have you seen Mat. Betham's 'Lay of Marie?' I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

[Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, was published in 1814. Driven from his throne by the Moors, Roderick had disguised himself as a monk under the name of Father Maccabee. *The Curse of Kehama* had been published in 1810; *Mador* in 1805; *Jean of Arc* in 1796. Southey was now poet laureate.

'I never read books of travels.' Writing to Dilke, of the *Athenæum*, for books, some years later, Lamb makes a point of 'no natural history or useful learning' being sent, 'such as Pyramids, Catcombs, Giraffes, Adventures in Southern Africa, etc.' None the less, as a boy, he tells us, he had read Bruce and applied his Abyssinian methods to the New River (see the *Elia* essay on newspapers).

'The crow on the sand.' In *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale*:

As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

Stanza xii, line 4.

'Whylear.' Not so long ago.

'The "White Doe."' Wordsworth's poem *The White Doe of Rylstone*, to be published this year, 1815.

'Mat. Betham's "Lay of Marie."' We shall come to this shortly. The poem was still in MS.

At Sotheby's on 31st July 1933 was sold a letter from Lamb to Basil Montagu, dated 20th June 1815, concerning the misfortunes of a man who had been at Christ's Hospital and asking for a presentation for his son.]



## 197. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

DEAR SOUTHEY,

Aug. 9th, 1815.

Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say, that Father Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue), and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Bonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your *boute-feu* (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of *matter-of-fact* with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. LAMB.

['Father Pardo.' Mrs. Anderson says that this fat friar was a Spanish priest and poet.

'The excellent Dodd.' The Rev. William Dodd (1729-77), compiler of *The Beauties of Shakespeare*, was hanged for forgery when Lamb was two years old. The case caused immense public interest.

'Bionaparte.' Waterloo had been fought on 18th June.

'Your bonte-feu.' The bonfire in honour of Waterloo flamed on Skiddaw on 21st August. See Southey's description in his letter to his brother, 23rd August 1815 (*Life and Correspondence*, vol. iv, page 120).

'Poet Settle.' Elkanah Settle (1648-1724) was chief organizer of the procession on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday in 1680, when the pope was burned in effigy.

Hartley Coleridge, now almost nineteen, after having been to school at Ambleside, had been sent to Oxford through the instrumentality of his uncle, Southey, being admitted to Merton College on 6th May 1815. At the time of Lamb's letter he was staying at Calne with his father.

Mr. Betty was the Young Roscius, who, after retiring from the phenomenon stage of his career in 1808, had since been to school and to Cambridge upon his earnings, and had now become an adult actor.

Poole was Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey, whom we have seen: Coleridge's old and very sensible friend.

Tobin would probably be James Webbe Tobin, the brother of the dramatist He had died in 1814.

'Louis the Desirable.' Louis XVIII, styled by the Royalists 'Le Désiré.' [

#### 198. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[9th August 1815.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We acknowledge with pride the receipt of both your hand writings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Miss Hutchinson has just transmitted us a letter containing, among other cheerful matter, the annunciation of a child born. Nothing of consequence has turned up in our parts since your departure. Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wishd we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are, every day, in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love.

Robinson is on the Circuit. Our Panegyrist I thought had forgotten

one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c.—There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these presents. Be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance methinks is too confined and straitlaced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend; why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and thro' all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me. Not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a freewill offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome.

Alsager (whom you call Alsinger—and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither) is well and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he and those of his constitution keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or have they any? or are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat under done, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way in a wantonness of provocation, and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture, tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it, and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone, and I'd venture the roof of my mouth that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happynessed friend is picking his crackers, not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and having performed it, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or could have his house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here *Heautontimorumenos*. M. Burney has been to Calais and has come home a travelled Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic Idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our Cabin.

Have you seen a curious letter in *Morn. Chron.*, by C. Ll., the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus.

That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences.

You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department, which if it take place will produce me more time, i.e. my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at 4 o Clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had.

As you say, how a man can fill 3 volumes up with an Essay on the Drama is wonderful. I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject, and yet I dare say \* \* \* \* \* [\*] as Von Slagel \* \* \* Did you ever read Charron on Wisdom? or Patrick's Pilgrim? if neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six Folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing Warehousekeepers Acc<sup>ts</sup>, and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a Lord of Liberty I shall be. I shall dance and skip and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow and throw 'em at rich men's night caps, and talk blank verse, hoity toity, and sing 'A Clerk I was in London Gay,' ban, ban, Ca-Caliban, like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that ally. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck. Good be to you all.

C. LAMB.

['A child born.' This was George Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's nephew. 'Our Panegyrist.' Thomas Noon Talfourd. This is Lamb's first mention of his future biographer. Talfourd was then just twenty, had published some poems, and was reading law with Chitty, the special pleader. He had met Lamb at the beginning of 1815 through William Evans, owner of the *Pamphleteer*, had scoured London for a copy of *Rosamund Gray*, and had written of Lamb in the *Pamphleteer* as one of the chief of living poets. He then became an ardent supporter of Wordsworth, his principal criticism of whom was written later for the *New Monthly Magazine*.]

'If presents be not the soul of friendship.' Lamb's 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' written many years later for the *Athenaeum*, reproduces this theme (see vol. i of my edition of the *Works*).

'Alsager.' Thomas Massa Alsager, a friend of Crabb Robinson, and through him of Lamb, was a strange blend of the financial and the musical critic. He controlled the departments of money and music for *The Times* for many years.

Mrs. Anderson notes that on 3rd August 1815 Godwin writes to his wife: 'Miss Lamb has just called in to ask me to sup with them on Saturday evening at Mr. Alsager's, in the Borough, a clever man, she says, a bachelor, a whist

player, and a new acquaintance of theirs. She says they were within an ace of embarking in the *Friendship* on Saturday last for Southend, agreeably to your invitation.'

'Field.' Barton Field (see note on page 390).

'Heautontimorumenos': The Self-Tormentor. The name of a comedy by Terence.

'C. Ll.' Capell Lofft (see note on page 350). He wrote to the *Morning Chronicle* for 2nd and 3rd August 1815, as Lamb says. The gist of his argument was in this sentence:

[7th para.] Bonaparte with the concurrence of the *Admiralty*, is within the limits of British *local* allegiance. He is a *temporary*, considered as private, though not a natural born *subject*, and as *such* within the limits of 31 Car. II, the *Habeas Corpus* Act, [etc.].

On 10th August he wrote again, quoting the lines from *The Tempest*:

The nobler action is,  
In virtue than in vengeance:—He being here  
The sole drift of our purpose, wrath here ends;  
Not a frown further.

'An Essay on the Drama.' This cryptic passage refers, I imagine, to a translation by John Black, afterwards the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, of August von Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 2 vols., 1815. Does Lamb mean: 'And yet, I dare say, I know as much as Von Slagel did'?

'Charron on Wisdom' and 'Patrick's Pilgrim.' Pierre Charron's *De la Sagesse*, and Bishop Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrim*, 1664, a curious anticipation of Bunyan. Lamb had written of both these books in a little essay contributed in 1813 to the *Examiner* entitled 'Books with One Idea in them,' which will be found in vol. i of my edition of the *Works*.

'Make mouths at the invisible event.' *Hamlet*, iv. iv. 50.

'A Clerk I was in London Gay.' A song sung in Colman's *Inkle and Yarico*, 1787, which Lamb actually did use as a motto for his *Elia* essay 'The Superannuated Man,' dealing with his emancipation ten years later.

#### 199. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

20 Aug., 1815.

DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON,

I subscribe most willingly to all my sister says of her Enjoyment at Cambridge. She was in silent raptures all the while *there*, and came home riding thro' the air (her 1st long outside journey) triumphing as if she had been *graduated*. I remember one foolish-pretty expression she made use of, 'Bless the little churches how pretty they are,' as those symbols of civilized life opened upon her view one after the other on this side Cambridge. You cannot proceed a mile without starting a steeple, with its little patch of villagery round it, enverduring the waste. I don't know how you will pardon part of her letter being a transcript, but writing to another Lady first (probably as the *easiest task* \*) it was

unnatural not to give you an accot<sup>t</sup> of what had so freshly delighted her, and would have been a piece of transcendent rhetorick (above her modesty) to have given two different accounts of a simple and univocal pleasure. Bless me how learned I write! but I always forget myself when I write to Ladies. One cannot tame one's erudition down to their merely English apprehensions. But this and all other faults you will excuse from yours truly

C. LAMB.

Our kindest loves to Joanna, if she will accept it from us who are merely nominal to her, and to the child and child's parent. Yours again.

C. L.

[*Mary Lamb adds this footnote :*]

\* '*Easiest Task.*' Not the true reason, but Charles had so connected Coleridge & Cambridge in my mind, by talking so much of him there, and a letter coming so fresh from *him*, in a manner *that was the reason* I wrote to them first. I make this apology perhaps quite unnecessarily, but I am of a very jealous temper myself, and more than once recollect having been offended at seeing kind expressions which had particularly pleased me in a friend's letter repeated word for word to another.—Farewell once more.

[Part of a joint letter from Mary and Charles Lamb, who had been paying a week-end visit to Cambridge. The 'other lady' was Mrs. Morgan, to whom Mary had written an account of the jaunt, which she then copied out for Sarah Hutchinson's benefit.]

#### 200. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: 1815.]

DR MISS BETHAM,

All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious to you, and you have been all the while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another & be quits. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my scull deep & invisible. I wish I was leprous & black jaundiced skin-over, and [? or] that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to

give up business rather and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. O that I had been a shoe-maker or a baker, or a man of large independent fortune. O darling Laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saint's Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity. *Otium cum vel sine dignitate*. Scandalous, dishonorable, any-kind-of-repose. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed, damned desks, trade, commerce, business—Inventions of that old original busybody brainworking Satan, sabbathless restless Satan—A curse relieves. Do you ever try it?

A strange Letter this to write to a Lady, but mere honey'd sentences will not distill. I dare not ask who revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape and I am ashamed, but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' he curse the India House & fire it to the ground) and may no unkind Error creep into Marie. May all its readers like it as well as I do & everybody about you like its kind author no worse. Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again? Why must I write of Tea & Drugs & Price Goods & bales of Indigo—farewell.

C. LAMB.

[Written at head of letter on margin the following:]

Mary goes to her Place on Sunday—I mean your maid, foolish Mary. She wants a very little brains only to be an excellent Serv. She is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

[Lamb had been revising part of Miss Betham's *Lay of Marie* for the press.

The two notes that follow were to William Ayrton (1777-1858), the critic and unpresario and, until he met the Novellos, Lamb's link with music.]

#### 201. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Oct. 4, 1815.

DEAR AYRTON,

I am confident that the word *air* in your sense does not occur in Spenser or Shakespeare, much less in older writers. The first trace I remember of it is in Milton's sonnet to Lawrence, 'Warble immortal verse and Tuscan air;' where, if the word had not been very newly familiarized, he would doubtless have used *airs* in the plural. Yours in haste,

C. L.

## 202. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Oct. 14, 1815.

DEAR A.,

Concerning 'Air'—Shakspeare Twelfth night has 'light airs & giddy recollections' I am sure I forget whereabouts—Also you will see another use of it in the Tempest (same sense) in Johnson's Dictionary. Spenser I still persist in, has it not, much less Chaucer. I have turned to all their places about music.

C. L.

No doubt we had it from the Italian *Aria*—now *Aria* is not the latin *Æra* modernized, but *Aer*, is it not?

[See *Twelfth Night*, II. iv. 5. *The Tempest* has 'Sounds and sweet airs' (III. ii. 145).]

## 203. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

Thursday 19 Oct. 1815.

My brother is gone to Paris.

DEAR MISS H.,

I am forced to be the replier to your Letter, for Mary has been ill and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favorable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six month's interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise; by God's blessing in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable, we are strong for the time as rocks, the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs. Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla, I feel I hardly feel enough for him, my own calamities press about me and involve



me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can, and all the kindness I can towards you all. God bless you. I hear nothing from Coleridge. Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Mary Lamb had recovered from her preceding attack in February. She did not recover from the present illness until December.

'The wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.' "'But God tempers the wind,'" said Maria, "to the shorn lamb"' (Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*). Also in Henri Estienne (1594). Another form is in *Jacula Prudentum* (1640), by George Herbert: 'To a close shorn sheep, God gives wind by measure.'

'Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla.' Priscilla Wordsworth (*née* Lloyd) died this month, aged thirty-three. Charles Lloyd, having just completed his translation of the tragedies of Alfieri, published in 1815, had been prostrated by a visitation of his malady so serious that he had to be placed in an asylum at York.

On 24th November 1815 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb, and they were later joined by Talfourd. This would be one of the occasions on which Talfourd collected the impressions of Lamb round about 1815, which he reproduced in his *Memorials of Lamb* in 1837.]

#### 204. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 25th, 1815.

DEAR OLD FRIEND AND ABSENTEE,

This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolkian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-checked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child*; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery.

I feel, I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo and his foolish priesthood! Come out of

Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's Church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a — or a —. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripple-gate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss Hayes, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wanderings of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said

he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism and metaphysics, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. LAMB.

[Since Lamb's last letter Manning had entered Lhasa, the sacred city of Thibet, being the first Englishman to do so. He remained there until April 1812, when he returned to Calcutta. Then he took up his abode once more in Canton, and, in 1816, moved to Peking as interpreter to Lord Amherst's embassy, returning to England the following year.

'Norfolcian.' Manning was a Norfolk man, and Norfolk was the chief source of supply of Christmas turkeys for the London market.

'Maclaurin.' Here Lamb surprises the reader by a reasonable remark. Colin Maclaurin, the mathematician, was the author of *A Treatise of Fluxions*. Euler's contributions to the subject are well known, and were mostly published by the St. Petersburg Academy from 1727 to 1783.

Coleridge actually had begun many years before an epic on the subject of the 'Wanderings of Cain.'

'St. Mary's Church.' At Cambridge.]

## 205. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 26th, 1815.

DEAR MANNING,

Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of improbable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to

confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain agoing; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing—but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney (*ci-devant* Holcroft) never let her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a brand new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco*! Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realized. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla, wife of Kit Wordsworth! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his damn'd eye upon us, and is w[h]etting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, 'The good man at the hour of death.' I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these latter may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fireside just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring

astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

[Addressed]: Thomas Manning, Esq., St. Helena.

['The good man at the hour of death.' I have not found the picture to which Lamb refers. Probably a popular print of the day, or he may have been incorrectly remembering Blake's 'Death of the Good Old Man' in Blair's *Graw*.

Manning, by changing his plans, did not reach St. Helena when he expected to; not, indeed, until July 1817, when he met Napoleon.

On 12th February 1816 Crabb Robinson went to Drury Lane with Jane Collier and Mary Lamb to see *A New Way to pay Old Debts*.)

#### 206. TO LEIGH HUNT

[P.M. 4 o'clock, 24th March 1816.]

DEAR SIR,

We were much gratified by the token of your remembrance, though we had read Rimini previously with great delight, & agree in thinking it superior to your former poems. The third Canto is in particular my favorite. We congratulate you most sincerely on the fruit of your prison hours. Mary joins me in kindest remembrances to Mrs. H. not forgetting our old grave friend.

[Leigh Hunt had been released from the Surrey Gaol in February 1815, and moved to the Vale of Health, where this note was addressed early in 1816. His new poem was *The Story of Rimini*. The 'grave friend' was little Thornton Leigh Hunt, whom, in the verses to him, Lamb called 'serious infant'.]

#### 207. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 9th April 1816.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the Books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your Suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till People have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves More Bodleiano, and People may come

and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow, some mean to read but don't read, and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money, they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Cov. Gard. Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, tho' (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, tho' it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O' Neil or a Mr. Kean. However he is going to day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive Poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature by instinct to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chemist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls. He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H. my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind Letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time, God bless him.

Tell Mrs. W. her Postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. 'Likelihood' for instance is thus typified [*here Lamb makes an illegible scribble*].

I should not wonder if the constant making out of such Paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s Eyes as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy I hear has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress in corresponding lucidness upon our outward eyesight.

Mary's Love to all, She is quite well.

I am call'd off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool—but why do I relate this to you who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of Deposits, of Interest, of Warehouse rent, and Contingent Fund—Adieu.

C. LAMB.

A longer Letter when C. is gone back into the Country, relating his success, &c.—my judgment of *your* new Books &c. &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

Yours again

C. L.

Tuesday 9 Apr. 1816.

[Wordsworth had sent Lamb, presumably in proof (see Letter 208), *Thanksgiving Ode, January 18, 1816, with other short Pieces, chiefly referring to Recent Public Events, 1816*—the subject of the ode being the peace that had come upon Europe with the downfall of Napoleon.

'More Bodleiano.' According to Macray's *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (second edition, 1890, page 121), books seem to have been chained in the Bodleian Library up to 1751. The process of removing the chains seems to have begun in 1757. In 1761 as many as 1,448 books were unchained at a cost of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. apiece. A dozen years later discarded chains were sold at the rate of 2d. for a long chain, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for a short one, and if one hankered after a hundredweight of them, the wish could be gratified on payment of 14s. Many loose chains are still preserved in the library as relics. *The Chained Library*, by Canon Streeter, develops the theme.

'For of those who borrow.' Lamb's *Elia* essay, 'The Two Races of Men,' may have had its germ in this passage.

'Helluo Librorum': A gormandizer of books. Burton uses the phrase in the *Anatomy*.

Coleridge came to London from Calne in March, bringing with him the manuscript of *Zapolya*. He had already had correspondence with Lord Byron concerning a tragedy for Drury Lane, on whose committee Byron had a seat, but he had done nothing towards writing it. *Zapolya* was published in 1817. Coleridge's lodgings were at 43 Norfolk Street, Strand. On 6th April 1816 Grabb Robinson met Mary Lamb just as he had returned from circuit, and took tea with her and Charles. He found Coleridge and Morgan at their house.

'Lycophron.' The Greek poet and grammarian, called 'Tenebrosus,' on account of the obscurity of his poem *Cassandra*.]

#### 208. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[26th April 1816.]

SIR,

PLEASE to state the Weights and Amounts of the following Lots  
of sold Sale, 181 for

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. LAMB.

Accountant's Office,  
26 Apr. 1816

DEAR W.,

I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the *Revise* of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder

I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battered*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the Printer not to neglect the Correction. I know how such a blunder would 'batter at your Peace.' [*'Batter' is written 'batten' and corrected to 'batter' in the margin.*] With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted, called for. The parallel of Cotton with Butts I heartily approve; Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. 'Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence' is exquisite. The Poems I endeavored not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some Picture Gallery I was never at before, and going by to day by chance, found the door open, had but 5 minutes to look about me, peeped in, just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained,—not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing *Xtabel*, by L<sup>d</sup> Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, *Kubla Khan*—which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it, but there is an observation 'Never tell thy dreams,' and I am almost afraid that *Kubla Khan* is an owl that won't bear day light, I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducing to letters, no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with extacy *Mild Arcadians ever blooming*, till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and think it better than *Windsor Forest*, *Dying Xtian's* address &c.—C. has sent his *Tragedy* to D. L. T. —it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving it, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is at present under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?) a High-gate Apothecary, where he plays at leaving off *Laud—m*. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Archangel a little damaged.

Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind Letter? We are not quiet enough. Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but 4 miles, and the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of 50 ordinary Persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius,



for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *author of the Excursion*, I should in a very little time lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material*; there is not as much metaphysics in 36 of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's treatise on the Human understanding, or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the Pleasures of Hope or more natural Beggar's Petition. I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now within 4 lines I was call'd off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete Errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the Chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N.B. Nothing said above to the contrary but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any, but I pay dearer, what amuses others robs me of myself, my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work, it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump from ten to four, but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head akes and you have had enough. God bless you.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb had been correcting the proofs of Wordsworth's *Letter to a Friend of Burns*, and his *Thanksgiving Ode, with other short Pieces*, both published in 1816. In the *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, which was called forth by the intended republication of Burns's life by Dr. Currie, Wordsworth incidentally compares Burns and Cotton. The phrase which Lamb commends is in the description of *Tam o' Shanter* (page 22): 'This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality. . . .'

Coleridge's *Christabel* (with *Kubla Khan* and *The Pains of Sleep*) was published by Murray in 1816. It ran into a second edition quickly, but was not too well received. The *Edinburgh* indeed described it as destitute of one ray of genius. In a letter from Fanny Godwin to Mary Shelley, 20th July 1816, in Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, we read that 'Lamb says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; and that no one understood it, and *Kubla Khan* is nonsense.' But this was probably idle gossip. Lamb had admired *Christabel* to the full, but he may have thought its publication in an incomplete state an error.

Coleridge was introduced to Mr. James Gillman of the Grove, Highgate, by Dr. Adams of Hatton Garden, to whom he had applied for medical aid. Adams suggested that Gillman should take Coleridge into his house. Gillman arranged on 11th April that Adams should bring Coleridge on the following

day. Coleridge went alone and conquered. He promised to begin domestication on the next day, and 'I looked with impatience,' wrote Gillman in his *Life of Coleridge*, 'for the morrow . . . I felt indeed almost spellbound, without the desire of release.' Coleridge did not come on the morrow, but two days later. He remained with the Gillmans for the rest of his life.

*The Pleasures of Hope*, by Thomas Campbell; *The Beggar's Petition*—'Pity the sorrows of a poor old man'—by Thomas Moss (1808), a poem to be found in many recitation books. Lamb alluded to it in the *London Magazine* version of his *Elia* essay, 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars.'

'Mild Arcadians.' From Pope's *Song by a Person of Quality*.

'Whiff and wind.' See *Hamlet*, II. II. 495.]

## 209. TO LEIGH HUNT

[13th May 1816.]

DEAR SIR,

I thank you much for the Curious Volume of Southey, which I return, together with Falstaff's Letters, Elgin Stone Report, & a little work of my own, of which perhaps you have no copy & I have a great many.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[In Hunt's hand below:

'Received from C. Lamb 13th May 1816—

L. H.]

Southey's 'curious volume' might have been the *Omniana*, published in 1812. The Elgin Stone Report was that drawn up by a select committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1816 to inquire into the desirability of purchasing the Elgin Marbles, as they are more commonly called, for the nation. They are now in the British Museum. Public opinion in their favour was much influenced by the impassioned advocacy of Benjamin Robert Haydon, whom Lamb knew. What book of Lamb's is referred to I cannot say.]

## 210. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 23rd September 1816.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

It seems an age since we have corresponded, but indeed the interim has been stuff'd out with more variety than usually chequers my same-seeming existence.—Mercy on me, what a traveller have I been since I wrote you last! what foreign wonders have been explored! I have seen Bath, King Bladud's ancient well, fair Bristol, seed-plot of suicidal Chatterton, Marlbro', Chippenham, Calne, famous for nothing in

particular that I know of—but such a vertigo of locomotion has not seized us for years. We spent a month with the Morgans at the last named Borough—August—and such a change has the change wrought in us that we could not stomach wholesome Temple air, but are absolutely rustivating (O the gentility of it) at Dalston, about one mischievous boy's stone's throw off Kingsland Turnpike, one mile from Shoreditch church,—thence we emanate in various directions to Hackney, Clapton, Totnam, and such like romantic country. That my lungs should ever prove so dainty as to fancy they perceive differences of air! but so it is, tho' I am almost ashamed of it, like Milton's devil (turn'd truant to his old Brimstone) I am purging off the foul air of my once darling tobacco in this Eden, absolutely snuffing up pure gales, like old worn out Sin playing at being innocent, which never comes again, for in spite of good books and good thoughts there is something in a Pipe that virtue cannot give tho' she give her unendowed person for a dowry.

Have you read the review of Coleridge's character, person, physiognomy &c. in the Examiner—his features even to his *nose*—O horrible license beyond the old Comedy. He is himself gone to the sea side with his favorite Apothecary, having left for publication as I hear a prodigious mass of composition for a Sermon to the middling ranks of people to persuade them they are not so distressed as is commonly supposed. Methinks he should recite it to a congregation of Bilston Colliers,—the fate of Cinna the Poet would instantaneously be his. God bless him, but certain that rogue-Examiner has beset him in most unmannerly strains. Yet there is a kind of respect shines thro' the disrespect that to those who know the rare compound (that is the subject of it) almost balances the reproof, but then those who know him but partially or at a distance are so extremely apt to drop the qualifying part thro' their fingers. The 'after all, Mr. Wordsworth is a man of great talents, if he did not abuse them' comes so dim upon the eyes of an Edinbro' review reader, that have been gloating-open chuckle-wide upon the preceding detail of abuses, it scarce strikes the pupil with any consciousness of the letters being there, like letters writ in lemon. There was a cut at me a few months back by the same hand, but my agnomen or agni-nomen not being calculated to strike the popular ear, it dropt anonymous, but it was a pretty compendium of observation, which the author has collected in my disparagement, from some hundreds of social evenings which we had spent together,—however in spite of all, there is something tough in my attachment to H— which these violent strainings cannot quite dislocate or sever asunder. I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending to but his. There is monstrous little sense in the world, or I am monstrous clever, or squeamish

or something, but there is nobody to talk to—to talk *with* I should say—and to go talking to one's self all day long is too much of a good thing, besides subjecting one to the imputation of being out of one's senses, which does no good to one's temporal interest at all.

By the way, I have seen Coler<sup>ge</sup>, but once this 3 or 4 months. He is an odd person, when he first comes to town he is quite hot upon visiting, and then he turns off and absolutely never comes at all, but seems to forget there are any such people in the world. I made one attempt to visit him (a morning call) at Highgate, but there was something in him or his apothecary which I found so unattractively repulsive from any temptation to call again, that I stay away as naturally as a Lover visits. The rogue gives you Love Powders, and then a strong horse drench to bring 'em off your stomach that they mayn't hurt you.

I was very sorry the printing of your Letter was not quite to your mind, but I surely did not think but you had arranged the manner of breaking the paragraphs from some principle known to your own mind, and for some of the Errors, I am confident that Note of Admiration in the middle of two words did not stand so when I had it, it must have dropt out and been replaced wrong, so odious a blotch could not have escaped me. Gifford (whom God curse) has persuaded squinting Murray (whom may God not bless) not to accede to an offer Field made for me to print 2 vols. of Essays, to include the one on Hog<sup>rth</sup>, and 1 or 2 more, but most of the matter to be new, but I dare say I should never have found time to make them; M. would have had 'em, but shewed specimens from the Reflector to G—, as he acknowledged to Field, and Crispin did for me. 'Not on his soal but on his soul, damn'd Jew' may the malediction of my eternal antipathy light.

We desire much to hear from you, and of you all, including Miss Hutchinson, for not writing to whom Mary feels a weekly (and did for a long time feel a daily) Pang. How is Southey?—I hope his pen will continue to move many years smoothly and continuously for all the rubs of the rogue Examiner. A pertinacious foul-mouthed villain it is!

This is written for a rarity at the seat of business: it is but little time I can generally command from secular calligraphy—the pen seems to know as much and makes letters like figures—an obstinate clerkish thing. It shall make a couplet in spite of its nib before I have done with it,

'and so I end

Commending me to your love, my dearest friend.'

from Leaden Hall, Septem<sup>r</sup> something, 1816

C. LAMB.

[The Lambs had taken summer lodgings—at 14 Kingsland Row, Dalston—which they retained for some years. See the first paragraph of the first *Elia* essay for an echo.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I have been struck by Lamb's attraction for the name August. In this letter he says: "We spent a month with the Morgans at the last-named borough—August . . ." whereas we have seen that it was June and July. Again, when he wrote to Allsop about being one of his executors he dated the letter 9th August, whereas it was postmarked 9th September. Again, the letter to J. B. Dibdin, postmarked 2nd October 1827, was dated by Lamb 2nd August. Again, in a letter to Ollier, autumn of 1826, he asks for the *New Monthly*, which contained his essay on sulkiness (which had appeared in the September number) "which I had not about July or August last."

Hazlitt's article on Coleridge was in the *Examiner* for 8th September. Among other things Hazlitt said: 'Mr. Shandy would have settled the question at once: "You have little or no nose, Sir."'

One passage in the article gives colour to the theory that Hazlitt occasionally borrowed from Lamb's conversation. In Lamb's letter to Wordsworth of 26th April 1816, he has the celebrated description of Coleridge, 'an archangel a little damaged.' Hazlitt in this article writes: 'If he had had but common moral principle, that is, sincerity, he would have been a great man; nor hardly, as it is, appears to us:

Less than arch-angel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscur'd.'

Hazlitt may have heard Lamb's epithet, backed probably by the same passage from *Paradise Lost*.

Crabb Robinson tells us, in his *Diary*, that Coleridge was less hurt by the article than he anticipated. 'He denies H., however, originality, and ascribes to L. [Lamb] the best ideas in H.'s articles. He was not displeased to hear of his being knocked down by John Lamb lately.'

'Cinna the poet.' See *Julius Caesar*, III. iii. 32: 'Tear him for his bad verses.'

'Agni-nomen.' From *agnus*, a lamb.

'After all, Mr. Wordsworth . . .' The *Edinburgh Review* article on *The Excursion*, in November 1814, beginning, 'This will never do,' had at least two lapses into fairness: 'But the truth is, that Mr. Wordsworth, with all his perversities, is a person of great powers'; and 'Nobody can be more disposed to do justice to the great powers of Mr. Wordsworth than we are.'

'The printing of your Letter.' The *Letter to a Friend of Burns* (see above, Letter 208).

'2 vols. of Essays.' These were printed with poems as *The Works of Charles Lamb* by the Olliers in 1818.

'Crispin.' Gifford (see note to the letter to Wordsworth, No. 190).

'Southey.' Hazlitt's attacks on the laureate were continuous.]

## 211. TO LEIGH HUNT

[Dated at end: 7th December 1816.]

DEAR HUNT,

It gave me great pain to find that you probably staid at home on Sunday last upon my making a kind of promise to come. I thought

you were always at home on that day & did not consider my failing as likely to inconvenience you at all. The fact is I have been very unwell, suffering from an intense cold, & having grown somewhat effeminate from country hours find myself less able than ever to return to London ones. Night air & late going to bed kill me.

I hope you will forgive me & allow me to come when I get a little better, which I hope will not be long. Your kindness expressed towards me in so public & yet so private a way—and VERSES too—make me ashamed of my seeming ingratitude. Believe me they were not lost upon me. You are often in my recollections. There is not a shadow of misunderstanding left I hope on either side. My sister joins in kind rememb<sup>ces</sup> & means to join me in personal apology.

Believe me very kindly yours

C. LAMB.

[Leigh Hunt's verses to Lamb appeared in the *Examiner* on 20th August 1816. They begin:

O Thou, whom Old Homer would call, were he living,  
Home-lover, thought-feeder, abundant joke-giving . . .]

## 212. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Friday Ap. 18, 1817.

DEAR A.,

I am in your debt for a very delightful evening—I should say two—but Don Giovanni in particular was exquisite, and I am almost inclined to allow Music to be one of the Liberal Arts; which before I doubted. Could you let me have 3 Gallery Tickets—don't be startled—they shall positively be the last—or 2 or 1—for the same, for to-morrow or Tuesday. They will be of no use for to-morrow if not put in the post *this day* address to me, Mr Lamb, India House; if for any other evening, your usual blundering direction, No. 3 Middle Temple instead of 4 Inner Temple Lane will do.

Yours, CH. LAMB.

## 213. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Temple 12 May 1817.

My dear friend—  
Before I end—  
Have you any  
More orders for Don Giovanni

To give  
Him that doth live  
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery  
I mean Gallery  
ones.

For I am a person that shuns  
All ostentation,  
And being at the top of the fashion,  
And seldom go to operas  
But in formâ Pauperis.  
I go to the Play

In a very economical sort of way.

Rather to see  
Than be seen.

Though I'm no ill sight  
Neither

By candle light  
And in some kinds of weather.

You might pit me  
For height  
Against Kean.

But in a grand tragic scene  
I'm nothing.

It would create a kind of loathing  
To see me act Hamlet.

There'd be many a damn let  
Fly

At my presumption  
If I should try

Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish

This which they call the lapidary  
Style?

Opinions vary.

The late Mr. Mellish  
Could never abide it.

He thought it vile,  
And coxcombical.

My friend the Poet Laureat,  
Who is a great lawyer at

Any thing comical,  
 Was the first who tried it,  
 But Mellish could never abide it.  
 But it signifies very little what Mellish said,  
 Because he is dead.  
 For who can confuse  
 A body that's mute?  
 Or would who fight  
 With a senseless sprite?  
 Or think of troubling  
 An impenetrable old goblin  
 That's dead and gone  
 And stiff as a stone  
 To convince him with arguments pro & con  
 As if he were some live logician  
 Bred up at Merton,  
 Or Mr. Hazlitt the Metaphysician?  
 Ha! Mr. Ayrton,  
 With all your rare tone,

For tell me how should an apparition  
 List to your call,  
 Though you talk'd for ever  
 Ever so clever,  
 When his ear itself  
 By which he must hear or not hear at all  
 Is laid on the shelf?  
 Or put the case  
 (For more grace)  
 It were a female spectre,  
 How could you expect her  
 To take much gust  
 In long speeches,  
 With her tongue as dry as dust,  
 In a sandy place,  
 Where no peaches,  
 Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,  
 To drop on the drouth of an arid harangue,  
 Or quench  
 With their sweet drench  
 The fiery pangs which the worms inflict  
 With their endless nibblings,



Like quibblings,  
Which the corpse may dislike but can ne'er contradict?  
Ha! Mr. Ayrton!  
With all your rare tone—  
I am  
C. LAMB.

[The original of this letter, in which are many changes of mind, is now in America. I have done my best to make a good text.

'Rather to see.' Ovid's ladies went to the play for both purposes. *Art of Love*, 1. 99.

'You might pit me for height against Kean.' This was so. Edmund Kean was small in stature, though not so 'immaterially' built as Lamb is said to have been.

The Laureate, Southey, had first tried the lapidary style in *Gooseberry Pie*; later, without rhymes, in *Thalaba*.

'Mr. Mellish.' Possibly the Joseph Charles Mellish who translated Schiller.

'Merton.' Hartley Coleridge was then at this college.

Some time in the intervening three months before the next letter the Lambs went to Brighton for their holiday.]

## 214. TO BARRON FIELD

Aug. 31st, 1817.

MY DEAR BARRON,

The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the 'Statesman'—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain 'small deer.'

Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:

So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself  
Scarce seemeth there to be.

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation.

Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (*videlicet*, little or nothing,) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere.

C. L.

[This is Lamb's first letter that has been preserved to Barron Field. Barron Field (1786-1846) was a lawyer, a son of Henry Field, apothecary to Christ's Hospital, and brother of a fellow clerk of Lamb's in the India House. He had also been a contributor to Leigh Hunt's *Reflector* in 1810-12. Field was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, whither he sailed

in 1816, reaching Sydney in February 1817. His wife was a Miss Jane Carncroft.

This letter forms the groundwork of Lamb's *Elia* essay on 'Distant Correspondents,' which may be read with it as an example of the difference in richness between Lamb's epistolary and finished literary style.

I have not seen the original. In Macdonald's edition 'cursed plagiarists' is 'damn'd plagiarists.'

'So thievish 'tis . . .' A perversion of Coleridge's lines, in *The Ancient Mariner*:

So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be.

'Poor Mitchell's death.' This was one of the lies referred to a little lower, for Thomas Mitchell, who had been at Christ's Hospital, was a friend of Leigh Hunt's, and knew Lamb, lived till 1845. He translated Aristophanes.

Thomas Barnes (1785-1841), another old Christ's Hospitaler, and a contributor to the *Reflector*, became editor of *The Times* in 1817. His projected journey was one of the 'lies'; nor did Alsager, another *Times* man, whom we have already met, turn actor.]

## 215. TO CHARLES CHAMBERS

[Undated: ? 1st September 1817.]

With regard to a John-dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about, I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of Quin who patronised it, and whose taste (of a *dead* man) I had as lieve go by as anybody's (Apicius and Heliogabalus excepted—this latter started nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains as a garnish).

Else in *itself*, and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not that moist mellow oleaginous gliding smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, &c., that your Brighton Turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavor of any that swims—most genial and at home to the palate.

Nor has it on the other hand that fine falling off flakiness, that oleaginous peeling off (as it were, like a sea onion), which endears your cod's head & shoulders to some appetites; that manly firmness, combined with a sort of womanish coming-in-pieces, which the same cod's head & shoulders hath, where the whole is easily separable, pliant to a knife or a spoon, but each individual flake presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth. You understand me—these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavor of its own, perfectly distinct from Cod or Turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable—but to my unpractised tooth it presented a crude

river-fish flavor, like your Pike or Carp, and perhaps like them should have been tamed & corrected by some laborious & well chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings-off. Your choicest relishes (like nature's loveliness) need not the foreign aid of ornament, but are when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy & a squeeze of lemon) then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again next Summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently informed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John Dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as to be sure he is the very Rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the Sea Satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible), when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish in his parts internal, & have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a Poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not true to shew your wit. If I had no wit but what I must shew at the expence of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as \* \* \* at the Tea Warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our death-bed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or . . . . For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the Town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other, for robbing an old woman at church of a seal ring. And Dr. Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these untrue stories about among people that know any thing. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment*, particularly shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare. I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word.—I love you for your noble attachment to the fat unctuous juices of deer's flesh & the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favorite, which I ventured to recommend to you as a substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with my palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly ran riot in its praises, and now it is prostitute & common.—But I have made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over, perhaps it will be my last mouthful in this world; delicious thought,

enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square in or near the fried joint of . . . lean neither alto- beautiful com- Nature must have Park venison, before two substances, the dry & the oleaginous, to punish sinful mankind; Adam ate them entire & inseparate, and this little taste of Eden in the knuckle bone of a fried . . . seems the only relique of a Paradaisical state. When I die, an exact description of its topography shall be left in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on which these words, 'C. Lamb dying imparts this to C. Chambers as the only worthy depository of such a secret.' You'll drop a tear. . . .

[There are certain slight changes in the text of this letter as given in Macdonald's edition. 'True,' for example, at the beginning of the fifth paragraph, is 'sure.'

Charles Chambers was the brother of John Chambers (see Letter 224). He had been at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and subsequently became a surgeon in the Navy. He retired to Leamington and practised there until his death, somewhere about 1857, said W. C. Hazlitt. He seems to have inherited some of the epicure's tastes of his father, the 'sensible clergyman in Warwickshire' who, Lamb tells us in 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' 'used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare.'

This letter adds one more to the list of Lamb's gustatory raptures, and it is remarkable as being his only eulogy of fish. W. C. Hazlitt said that the date, 1st September 1817, had been added by another hand; but the Lambs were at Brighton that summer, and the reference to Dr. Parr, who died 6th March 1825, is probably only another joke. Fortunately the date in this particular case is unimportant. W. C. Hazlitt suggested that the stupid person in the tea warehouse was Bye, whom we shall be meeting later (Letters 224 and 232).

Of Truss we know nothing. The name may be a misreading of Twiss (Horace Twiss, 1787-1849, politician, buffoon, and Mrs. Siddons's nephew), who was quite a likely person to be lied about jestingly at that time.]

## 216. TO JAMES AND LOUISA KENNEY

Londres, October [1817].

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is with infinite regret I inform you that the pleasing privilege of receiving letters, by which I have for these twenty years gratified my friends and abused the liberality of the Company trading to the Orient,

is now at an end. A cruel edict of the Directors has swept it away altogether. The devil sweep away their patronage also. Rascals who think nothing of sponging upon their employers for their Venison and Turtle and Burgundy five days in a week, to the tune of five thousand pounds in a year, now find out that the profits of trade will not allow the innocent communication of thought between their underlings and their friends in distant provinces to proceed untaxed, thus withering up the heart of friendship and making the news of a friend's good health worse than indifferent, as tidings to be deprecated as bringing with it ungracious expenses. Adieu, gentle correspondence, kindly conveyance of soul, interchange of love, of opinions, of puns and what not! Henceforth a friend that does not stand in visible or palpable distance to me, is nothing to me. They have not left to the bosom of friendship even that cheap intercourse of sentiment the twopenny medium. The upshot is, you must not direct any more letters through me. To me you may annually, or biennially, transmit a brief account of your goings on [on] a single sheet, from which after I have deducted as much as the postage comes to, the remainder will be pure pleasure. But no more of those pretty commissions and counter commissions, orders and revoking of orders, obscure messages and obscurer explanations, by which the intellects of Marshall and Fanny used to be kept in a pleasing perplexity, at the moderate rate of six or seven shillings a week. In short, you must use me no longer as a go-between. Henceforth I write up  
NO THOROUGHFARE.

Well, and how far is Saint Valery from Paris; and do you get wine and walnuts tolerable; and the vintage, does it suffer from the wet? I take it, the wine of this season will be all wine and water; and have you any plays and green rooms, and Fanny Kellies to chat with of an evening; and is the air purer than the old gravel pits, and the bread so much whiter, as they say? Lord, what things you see that travel! I dare say the people are all French wherever you go. What an overwhelming effect that must have! I have stood one of 'em at a time, but two I generally found overpowering, I used to cut and run; but, then, in their own vineyards may be they are endurable enough. They say marmosets in Senegambia are so pleasant as the day's long, jumping and chattering in the orange twigs; but transport 'em, one by one, over here into England, they turn into monkeys, some with tails, some without, and are obliged to be kept in cages.

I suppose you know we've left the Temple *pro tempore*. By the way, this conduct has caused strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her, at Monroe's, the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snow

Hill,—I mention no name, you shall never get out of me what lady I mean,—on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist-table. Her inquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me, how I stood in the India house, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought to be clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an unexpected call be gratifying or not, would it be better if she sent beforehand, did anybody come to see me, wasn't there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, didn't he come to see me, did he know how Mr. Morgan lived, she never could make out how they were maintained, was it true that he lived out of the profits of a linen-draper's shop in Bishopsgate Street (there she was a little right, and a little wrong—M. is a gentleman tobacconist); in short, she multiplied demands upon him till my friend, who is neither over-modest nor nervous, declared he quite shuddered. After laying me as bare to her curiosity as an anatomy he trembled to think what she would ask next. My pursuits, inclinations, aversions, attachments (some, my dear friends, of a most delicate nature), she lugged 'em out of him, or would, had he been privy to them, as you pluck a horse-bean from its iron stem, not as such tender rosebuds should be pulled. The fact is I am come to Kingsland, and that is the real truth of the matter, and nobody but yourselves should have extorted such a confession from me. I suppose you have seen by the Papers that Manning is arrived in England. He expressed some mortifications at not finding Mrs. Kenney in England. He looks a good deal sunburnt, and is got a little reserved, but I hope it will wear off. You will see by the Papers also that Dawe is knighted. He has been painting the Princess of Coborg and her husband. This is all the news I could think of. Write to us, but not by us, for I have near ten correspondents of this latter description, and one or other comes pouring in every day, till my purse strings and heart strings crack. Bad habits are not broken at once. I am sure you will excuse the apparent indelicacy of mentioning this, but dear is my shirt, but dearer is my skin, and it's too late when the steed is stole, to shut the door.—Well, and does Louisa grow a fine girl, is she likely to have her mother's complexion, and does Tom polish in French air—Henry I mean—and Kenney is not so fidgery, and you sit down sometimes for a quiet half-hour or so, and all is comfortable, no bills (that you call writs) nor anything else (that you are equally sure to miscall) to annoy you? Vive la gaité de cœur et la bell pastime, vive la beau France et revive ma cher Empreur.

C. LAMB.

[James Kenney and his wife were now living at Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme. Marshall we have already met (page 171), and Fanny was Fanny Holcroft.]

Lamb's friend, Fanny Kelly, is first mentioned by Lamb in this letter. Frances Maria Kelly (1790-1882), to give her her full name, was then playing at the Lyceum. We shall soon see much of her.

'We 've left the Temple *pro tempore*.' Referring to the Dalston lodgings.

'What lady I mean.' Mrs. Godwin lived in Skinner Street.

George Dawe was not knighted. Probably it was rumoured that he was to be. His portrait of Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg (who died in 1817 very soon after her marriage) was very popular.

Louisa would be Louisa Holcroft, with whom Lamb corresponded. In Tom Holcroft he also later took some interest.

Lamb probably knew French better than he pretends.]

## 217. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 21st November 1817.]

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mold, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans like mandrakes pull'd up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres with all [*a few words cut away*: Talfourd has 'their noises. Covent Garden'] dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four and twenty hours before she saw a Thief. She sits at the window working, and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life. It is a delicate subject, but is Mr. \* \* \* really married? and has he found a gargle to his mind? O how funny he did talk to me about her in terms of such mild quiet whispering speculative profligacy. But did the animalcule and she crawl over the rubric together, or did they not? Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favor of a princess dying. [*A line and signature cut away*.]

[The Lambs were now living at a brazier's shop, No. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden.]



'Spot I like best in all this great city.' See a little essay by Lamb on places of residence in London.

'Mr. \* \* \*.' One can but conjecture as to these asterisks. De Quincey, who was very small, married at the close of 1816.

'Pansies.' 'There is pansies, that's for thoughts.' Ophelia in *Hamlet*, iv. v. 176. And Wordsworth had used the flower in the *Ode on Immortality* to express pensive thoughts.

'A princess dying.' Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg. She was buried, amid national lamentation, on 19th November 1817.]

## 218. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

DEAR A.,

Russell House, Tuesday 25 Nov. 1817.

We keep our *Thursday* (which is become a moveable feast) this evening, viz. Tuesday. We need not say that your company will be most acceptable. If you can persuade Mrs. A. to accompany you, my sister begs me to say we shall consider the obligation double.—  
Yours truly C. L.

N.B.—Is not the above rather neatly worded?—above my usual cut, I mean. It strikes me so.

## 219. TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

DEAR J. P. C.,

The Garden of England,  
December 10, 1817.

I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakspear and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one); but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and Indiapendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and for the purpose I am once more enduring Southey's Curse. To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for

the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,

C. LAMB.

[The 'Garden of England' of the address stands, of course, for Covent Garden.

John Payne Collier (1789-1883), a Shakespearian critic and editor of old plays and poems, was then a reporter on *The Times*. He had recently married. Wordsworth also wrote to Collier on this subject. Coleridge's lectures were delivered in 1818, beginning on 27th January, in Flower-de-Luce Court. Their preservation we owe to Collier's shorthand notes.

'My Hindoo mythology . . . Southey's Curse.' *The Curse of Kehama*.]

## 220. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR G.,

Dec. 10th 1817.

I had an interview with Constable, who proposed to me to review 'Mandeville.' I am sorry to say that I must decline it; my time, health and spirits (my *time* particularly) do not admit of adding to my office business. I once undertook to review the 'Excursion,' and the plague, the intolerable plague and trouble, it cost me would excuse me to you if you could see my inside. I have not had half-an hour to myself (almost literally) since I moved. This must be my resolution; I hope you will have time to get it put into other hands. I could not do you service in 'proportion' of 1 to 1000 of trouble to myself.

I nevertheless subscribe myself

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Godwin's novel, *Mandeville, a Tale of the Seventeenth Century*, was published in 1817. Constable would be Archibald Constable, who published for Sir Walter Scott before Ballantyne, and then again after. He owned the *Edinburgh Review*, where, it is possible, Lamb's article was to appear.]

## 221. TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

MY DEAR HAYDON,

[26th] December 1817.

I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove North, at Rossi's, half-way up, right-hand side—if I can find it.

Yours,

20, Russell Court, Covent Garden East.

C. LAMB.

half-way up, next the corner, left hand side.

[Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846) was then principally known by his 'Judgment of Solomon'; he was at this time at work upon his most famous picture, 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.' Lamb's note, with the address so meticulously given by way of parodying Haydon's own methods, is in acceptance of the invitation to the famous dinner which Haydon gave on 28th December 1817, to Wordsworth, Keats, Monkhouse, and others, with the Comptroller of Stamps thrown in.

I interpose the host's own description of this amazing and most successful party:

On 28th December the immortal dinner came off in my painting-room, with Jerusalem towering up behind us as a background. Wordsworth was in fine cue, and we had a glorious set-to,—on Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Virgil. Lamb got exceedingly merry and exquisitely witty; and his fun in the midst of Wordsworth's solemn intonations of oratory was like the sarcasm and wit of the fool in the intervals of Lear's passion. He made a speech and voted me absent, and made them drink my health. 'Now,' said Lamb, 'you old lake poet, you rascally poet, why do you call Voltaire dull?' We all defended Wordsworth, and affirmed there was a state of mind when Voltaire would be dull. 'Well,' said Lamb, 'here 's Voltaire—the Messiah of the French nation, and a very proper one too.'

He then, in a strain of humour beyond description, abused me for putting Newton's head into my picture,—'a fellow,' said he, 'who believed nothing unless it was as clear as the three sides of a triangle.' And then he and Keats agreed he had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours. It was impossible to resist him, and we all drank 'Newton's health, and confusion to mathematics.' It was delightful to see the good-humour of Wordsworth in giving in to all our frolics without affectation and laughing as heartily as the best of us.

By this time other friends joined, amongst them poor Ritchie who was going to penetrate by Fezzan to Timbuctoo. I introduced him to all as 'a gentleman going to Africa.' Lamb seemed to take no notice; but all of a sudden he roared out, 'Which is the gentleman we are going to lose?' We then drank the victim's health, in which Ritchie joined.

In the morning of this delightful day, a gentleman, a perfect stranger, had called on me. He said he knew my friends, had an enthusiasm for Wordsworth, and begged I would procure him the happiness of an introduction. He told me he was a comptroller of stamps, and often had correspondence with the poet. I thought it a liberty; but still, as he seemed a gentleman, I told him he might come.

When we retired to tea we found the comptroller. In introducing him to Wordsworth I forgot to say who he was. After a little time the comptroller looked down, looked up and said to Wordsworth, 'Don't you think, sir, Milton was a great genius?' Keats looked at me, Wordsworth looked at the comptroller. Lamb who was dozing by the fire turned round and said, 'Pray, sir, did you say Milton was a great genius?' 'No, sir; I asked Mr. Wordsworth if he were not.' 'Oh,' said Lamb, 'then you are a silly fellow.' 'Charles! my dear Charles!' said Wordsworth; but Lamb, perfectly innocent of the confusion he had created, was off again by the fire.

After an awful pause the comptroller said, 'Don't you think Newton a great genius?' I could not stand it any longer. Keats put his head into my books. Ritchie squeezed in a laugh. Wordsworth seemed asking himself, 'Who is this?' Lamb got up, and taking a candle, said, 'Sir, will you allow

me to look at your phrenological development?' He then turned his back on the poor man, and at every question of the comptroller he chaunted:

'Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John  
Went to bed with his breeches on.'

The man in office, finding Wordsworth did not know who he was, said in a spasmodic and half-chuckling anticipation of assured victory, 'I have had the honour of some correspondence with you, Mr. Wordsworth.' 'With me, sir?' said Wordsworth, 'not that I remember.' 'Don't you, sir? I am a comptroller of stamps.' There was a dead silence;—the comptroller evidently thinking that was enough. While we were waiting for Wordsworth's reply, Lamb sung out

'Hey diddle diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle.'

'My dear Charles!' said Wordsworth,—

'Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John,'

chaunted Lamb, and then rising, exclaimed, 'Do let me have another look at that gentleman's organs.' Keats and I hurried Lamb into the painting-room, shut the door and gave way to inextinguishable laughter. Monkhouse followed and tried to get Lamb away. We went back, but the comptroller was irreconcilable. We soothed and smiled and asked him to supper. He stayed though his dignity was sorely affected. However, being a good-natured man, we parted all in good-humour, and no ill effects followed.

All the while, until Monkhouse succeeded, we could hear Lamb struggling in the painting-room and calling at intervals: 'Who is that fellow? Allow me to see his organs once more.'

It was indeed an immortal evening. Wordsworth's fine intonation as he quoted Milton and Virgil, Keats's eager inspired look, Lamb's quaint sparkle of lambent humour, so speeded the stream of conversation, that in my life I never passed a more delightful time. All our fun was within bounds. Not a word passed that an apostle might not have listened to. It was a night worthy of the Elizabethan age, and my solemn Jerusalem flashing up by the flame of the fire, with Christ hanging over us like a vision, all made up a picture which will long glow upon—

that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude.

Keats made Ritchie promise he would carry his Endymion to the great desert of Sahara and fling it in the midst.

Poor Ritchie went to Africa, and died, as Lamb foresaw, in 1819. Keats died in 1821, at Rome. C. Lamb is gone, joking to the last. Monkhouse is dead, and Wordsworth and I are the only two now living (1841) of that glorious party.]

## 222. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

DR C.,

[No date: ? Early 1818.]

Your sonnet is capital. The Paper ingenious, only that it split into 4 parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to

the common English Paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the Iliad and Odyssey were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up and listen to the Kettle, and then PURR, which is their Poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembces to your good Host and Hostess

Yours ever

C. LAMB.

[The sonnet was Coleridge's *Fancy in Nubibus*; or, *The Poet in the Clouds*, printed first in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, edited and owned by J. M. Gutch, and afterwards in *Blackwood*, but now sent to Lamb in manuscript, written on seaweed, or on some preparation from it. Discovered by Major Butterworth, who published an article with illustrations in the *Bookman* in July 1920. The original was afterwards sold in New York.

This is the sonnet:

O! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,  
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,  
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,  
Or let the easily persuaded eyes  
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould  
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low  
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold  
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go  
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!  
Or, list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,  
Be that blind bard, who on the Chuan strand  
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,  
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssey  
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

#### 223. TO MRS. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

18 Feb. 1818. East India House.

(Mary shall send you all the *news*, which I find I have left out.)

MY DEAR MRS. WORDSWORTH,

I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of Commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of Goods, Cassia, Cardemoms, Aloes, Ginger, Tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections.

The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's (I write to *W. W.* now) Plato's double animal parted never longed [? more] to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his damn'd unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great Books, or compare sum with sum, and write PAID against this and UNP'D against t'other, and yet reserve in some 'corner of my mind' some darling thoughts all my own—faint memory of some passage in a Book—or the tone of an absent friend's Voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing—a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face—The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front—or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney—but there are a set of amateurs of the Belle Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rooks &c., what Coleridge said at the Lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use Reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egypt<sup>n</sup>. hieroglyph as long as the Pyramids will last before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanys me home lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door, up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication, knock at the door, in comes Mrs. Hazlitt, or M. Burney, or Morgan, or Demogorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone, a Process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange—for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine—wine can mollify stones. Then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless

'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choaking and death-doing, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bed time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner, but if you come, never go. The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening Company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth) and voices all the golden morning, and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co.

He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bed time, but even there these social frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed, just close to my bedroom window, is the club room of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. 'That fury being quenched'—the howl I mean—a curseder burden succeeds, of shouts and clapping and knocking of the table. At length over tasked nature drops under it and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of Dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christobel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke—'Every knell, the Baron saith, Wakes us up to a world of death,' or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is that by my central situation I am a little over companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the Harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a chearful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a

late visitation brought most welcome and carried away leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude at being so often favored with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect—or I should explain myself that instead of their return 220 times a year and the return of W. W. &c. 7 times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name.

CH. LAMB.

This to be read last.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H. but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If read, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. 'Gentlemen,' said I, and there I stoppt,—the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf—not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope (as there seemd to be between me and that Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office that I so strangely coiled up from at Haydons). I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—Accountants, Deputy Accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather Poetical; but as SHE makes herself manifest by the persons of such Beasts, I loathe and detest her as the Scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which Heads of offices, those true Liberty haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero—by a decree past this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Blast them. I speak it soberly. Dear W. W., be thankful for your Liberty.

We have spent two very pleasant Evenings lately with Mr. Monk-house.



[Mary Lamb's letter of news either was not written or has not been preserved. Lamb returned to the subject of this letter for his Popular Fallacy, 'That Home is Home,' in 1826. Previously to that essay he had written an article in the *New Times* on unwelcome callers (see my edition of the *Works*).

'Plato's double animal.' In the *Symposium*.

'Miss Burrell.' Fanny Burrell, afterwards Miss Gould. Lamb wrote in praise of her performance in *Don Giovanni in London*. See my edition again.

'What Coleridge said.' Coleridge was still lecturing on Shakespeare and poetry in Flower-de-Luce Court.

'Ante-Cadmeans.' Cadmus is fabled as having introduced the use of letters into Greece.

'The two theatres.' Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

'Bishop.' Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855), composer of *Home, Sweet Home*.

'Christobel's father.'

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,  
Knells us back to a world of death.

*Christabel*, part II, lines 1 and 2.

'W. H. goes on lecturing.' Hazlitt was delivering a course of lectures on the English poets at the Surrey Institution.

'Gentlemen' said I.' The dinner was given him by The Amicable Society of Blues, 11th February 1817. On another occasion Lamb, asked to give a toast, gave the best he knew—woodcock on toast. Recall also his toasts at Haydon's dinner.

'Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office.' See note to the letter to Haydon.

'Our red letter days.' Lamb repeats the complaint in his *Elia* essay, 'Oxford in the Vacation.' In 1820, I see from the directory, the accountant's office, where Lamb had his desk, kept sacred only five red-letter days, where, ten years earlier, it had observed many.

'Mr. Monkhouse.' Thomas Monkhouse, a friend of the Wordsworths and of Lamb. He was at Haydon's dinner.]

## 224. TO JOHN CHAMBERS

[No date: ? 1818.]

DEAR C.,

I steal a few minutes from a painful and laborious avocation, aggravated by the absence of some that should assist me, to say how extremely happy we should be to see you return clean as the cripple out of the pool of Bethesda. That damn'd scorbutic—how came you by it? . . . You are now fairly a damaged lot; as Venn would say, One Scratched. You might play Scrub in the *Beaux' Stratagem*. The best post your friends could promote you to would be a scrubbing post. 'Aye, there's the rub.' I generally get tired after the third rubber. But you, I suppose, tire twice the number every day. First, there's your mother, she begins after breakfast; then your little sister takes it up about

Nuncheon time, till her bones crack, and some kind neighbour comes in to lend a hand, scrub, scrub, scrub, and nothing will get the intolerable itch (for I am persuaded it is the itch) out of your penance-doing bones. A cursed thing just at this time, when everybody wants to get out of town as well as yourself. Of course, I don't mean to reproach you. You can't help it, the whoreson tingling in your blood. I dare say you would if you could. But don't you think you could do a little work, if you came? as much as D[odwell] does before 12 o'Clock. Hang him, there he sits at that cursed *Times*—and latterly he has had the *Berkshire Chronicle* sent him every Tuesday and Friday to get at the County news. Why, that letter which you favored him with, appears to me to be very well and clearly written. The man that wrote that might make out warrants, or write Committees. There was as much in quantity written as would have filled four volumes of the Indigo appendix; and when we are so busy as we are, every little helps. But I throw out these observations merely as innuendos. By the way there's a Doctor Lamert in Leadenhall Street, who sells a mixture to purify the blood. No. 114 Leadenhall Street, near the market. But it is necessary that his Patients should be on the spot, that he may see them every day. There's a sale of Indigo advertised for July, forty thousand lots—10,000 chests only, but they sell them in quarter chests which makes 40,000. By the bye a droll accident happened here on Thursday, Wadd and Plumley got quarrelling about a knee buckle of Hyde's which the latter affirmed not to be standard; Wadd was nettled at this, and said something reflecting on tradesmen and shopkeepers, and Plumley struck him. . . . Friend is married; he has married a Roman Catholic, which has offended his family, but they have come to an agreement, that the boys (if they have children) shall be bred up in the father's religion, and the girls in the mother's, which I think equitable enough. . . . I am determined my children shall be brought up in their father's religion, if they can find out what it is. Bye is about publishing a volume of poems which he means to dedicate to Mattheie. Methinks he might have found a better Mæcenas. They are chiefly amatory, others of them stupid, the greater part very far below mediocrity; but they discover much tender feeling; they are most like Petrarch of any foreign Poet, or what we might have supposed Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool! Grinwallows is made master of the ceremonies at Dandelion, near Margate; of course he gives up the office. 'My Harry' makes so many faces that it is impossible to sit opposite him without smiling. Dowley danced a Quadrille at Court on the Queen's birthday with Lady Thyme, Lady Desbrow, and Lady Louisa Manners. It is said his performance was graceful and airy.

Cabel has taken an unaccountable fancy into his head that he is Fuller, member for Sussex. He imitates his blunt way of speaking. I remain much the same as you remember, very universally beloved and esteemed, possessing everybody's good-will, and trying at least to deserve it; the same steady adherence to principle, and correct regard for truth, which always marked my conduct, marks it still. If I am singular in anything it is in too great a squeamishness to anything that remotely looks like a falsehood. I am call'd Old Honesty; sometimes Upright Telltruth, Esq., and I own it tickles my vanity a little. The Committee have formally abolish'd all holydays whatsoever—for which may the Devil, who keeps no holydays, have them in his eternal burning workshop. When I say holydays, I mean Calendar holydays, for at Medley's instigation they have agreed to a sort of scale by which the Chief has power to give leave of absence, viz.:—

Those who have been 50 years and upwards to be absent 4 days in the year, but not without leave of the Chief.

35 years and upward, 3 days,

25 years and upward, 2 days,

18 years and upward, 1 day,

which I think very Liberal. We are also to sign our name when we go as well as when we come, and every quarter of an hour we sign, to show that we are here. Mins and Gardner take it in turn to bring round the book—O here is Mins with the Book—no, it's Gardner—'What's that, G.?' 'The appearance book, Sir' (with a gentle inclination of his head, and smiling). 'What the devil is the quarter come again?' It annoys Dodwell amazingly; he sometimes has to sign six or seven times while he is reading the Newspaper—

[*Unfinished.*]

[John Chambers, the brother of Charles Chambers, was a colleague of Lamb's at the India House, and survived until 1872. It was to John Chambers that Lamb made the remark that he (Lamb) was probably the only man in England who had never worn boots and never ridden a horse. All the names in this letter are those of India House clerks. Matthie was Lt.-Col. James Matthie, who was associated with the office.

'Whoreson tingling.' 2 *Henry IV*, 1. ii. 129.

'Dandelion.' The ancient seat of the Dawnedelyens family at Margate. At that time a tea-garden. It is now a farm.

[John Fuller, M.P., was 'honest Jack Fuller,' of Rose Hill in Sussex, famous in the House for his bluntness.]

## 225. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Monday, Oct. 26th, 1818.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one; but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the 'foundations of our empire in the East,' I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent; but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but after all one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's 'Vignettes'? Some of them, the second particularly, 'To Lucy,' are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all.

C. L.

[Matilda Betham followed up *The Lay of Marie* with a volume entitled *Vignettes*.

'I am *better than I deserve*.' Lamb underlined these words, probably as a hint that he was not being very wise with his health; but they may have been a quotation from Coleridge. Carlyle in an account of a visit to Coleridge at Highgate (in the *Life of John Sterling*, Chapter VIII) puts it into Coleridge's mouth concerning a cup of tea. "'Ah, your tea is too cold, Mr. Coleridge," mourned the good Mrs. Gilman.' Although cold, it was better, he said, than he deserved. That was later, but it may have been a saying of which Coleridge was fond.]

## 226. TO FANNY KELLY

October 31, 1818.

['I hoap you will lave your orders with the hall keeper this even' for to have your Bons for tomor night as you promise me this day.

John hanley

'watchman from Drury

'Lane theatre.']

The above honest man once took a box for me and kept me in it all night.

CH. LAMB

Laureat to Miss Kelly.

[The first letter to Miss Kelly.

'Bons,' i.e. bones, free passes to the theatre.

Here may come a scrap which obviously accompanied a real letter:]

227. TO FANNY KELLY

I am the worst folder up of a letter in the world, tho' I hear there is a peasant in Moldavia who does not know how to fold one up at all.

C. L.

228. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 24th, 1818.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little; but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819—shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer;—how the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours,

C. LAMB.

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas-day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's day, Holy Innocents &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall.

[The ticket was for a new course of lectures, either on the History of Philosophy, or Six Plays of Shakespeare, both of which began in December 1818, and continued into 1819.]

Kenney's new farce was *A Word for the Ladies*, produced at Covent Garden on 17th December. In a letter to Leigh Hunt on 19th August 1823, Mary Shelley writes: 'K[enney] says that when he met you it was at Lamb's after a damnation of his case—when all his wish was that people *would not be sympathizing*, and that you seemed to understand this feeling so well and ate your supper with much appetite, and forced the conversation into the most opposite channels that he was quite delighted. "Yes," said Mrs. K., "I loved Mr. Hunt from that moment."'

'To catch a skirt of the old out-goer.' A reference to Coleridge's line in the *Ode on the Departing Year*:

I saw the skirts of the departing year.

'Skirts' was later altered to 'train.'

'*Improbe labor!*': O unrelenting toil. (Adapted from Virgil, *Georgics*, i. 145-6:

Labor omnia vincit  
Improbos.]

## 229. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

January 1819.

DEAR GUTCH,

I was thinking yesterday of our old play-going days, of your and my partiality to Mrs. Jordan; of our disputes as to the relative merits of Dodd and Parsons; and whether Smith or Jack Palmer, were the most of a Gentleman. The occasion of my falling into this train of thinking was my learning from the newspapers that Miss Kelly is paying the Bath Theatre a visit. (Your own Theatre, I am sorry to find, is shut up, either from parsimonious feeling, or through the influence of . . . principles.<sup>1</sup>) This lady has long ranked among the most considerable of our London performers. If there are one or two of greater name, I must impute it to the circumstance that she has never burst upon the town at once in the maturity of her powers; which is a great advantage to débutantes, who have passed their probationary years in Provincial Theatres. We do not hear them tuning their instruments. But she has been winning her patient way from the humblest gradations to the eminence which she has now attained, on the self same boards which supported her first in the slender pretensions of chorus-singer. I very much wish that you would go and see her. You will not see Mrs. Jordān, but something else; something on the whole very little, if at all,

<sup>1</sup> 'The word here omitted by the Bristol editor, we suppose, is *methodistical*.' —(Leigh Hunt in the *Examiner*.)

inferior to that lady, in her best days. I cannot hope that you will think so; I do not even wish that you should. Our longest remembrances are the most sacred; and I shall revere the prejudice, that shall prevent you from thinking quite so favorably of her as I do.—I do not well know how to draw a parallel between their distinct manners of acting. I seem to recognize the same pleasantness and nature in both: but Mrs. Jordan's was the carelessness of a child; her child-like spirit shook off the load of years from her spectators; she seemed one whom care could not come near; a privileged being, sent to teach mankind what it most wants, joyousness. Hence, if we had more unmixed pleasure from her performances, we had, perhaps, less sympathy with them than with those of her successor. This latter lady's is the joy of a freed spirit, escaping from care, as a bird that had been limed; her smiles, if I may use the expression, seemed saved out of the fire, relics which a good and innocent heart had snatched up as most portable; her contents are visitors, not inmates: she can lay them by altogether; and when she does so, I am not sure that she is not greatest. She is, in truth, no ordinary tragedian. Her *Yarico* is the most intense piece of acting which I ever witnessed, the most heart-rending spectacle. To see her leaning upon that wretched reed, her lover—the very exhibition of whose character would be a moral offence, but for her clinging and noble credulity—to see her lean upon that flint, and by the strong workings of passion imagine it a god—is one of the most afflicting lessons of the yearnings of the human heart and its sad mistakes, that ever was read upon a stage. The whole performance is every where *African*, fervid, glowing. Nor is this any thing more than the wonderful force of imagination in this performer; for turn but the scene, and you shall have her come forward in some kindly home-drawn character of an English rustic, a Phoebe, or a Dinah Cropley, where you would swear that her thoughts had never strayed beyond the precincts of the dairy, or the farm; or her mind known less tranquil passions than she might have earned among the flock, her out-of-door companions. See her again in parts of pure fun, such as the Housemaid in the *Merry Mourners*, where the suspension of the broom in her hand, which she had been delightfully twirling, on unexpectedly encountering her sweetheart in the character of a fellow-servant, is quite equal to Mrs. Jordan's cordial inebriation in *Nell*.—I do not know whether I am not speaking it to her honor, that she does not succeed in what are called fine lady parts. Our friend C. once observed, that no man of genius ever figured as a gentleman. Neither did any woman, gifted with Mrs. Jordan's or Miss Kelly's sensibilities, ever take upon herself to shine as a fine lady, the very essence of this character consisting in the entire repression of all

genius and all feeling. To sustain a part of this kind to the life, a performer must be haunted by a perpetual self-reference: she must be always thinking of herself, and how she looks, and how she deports herself in the eyes of the spectators; whereas the delight of actresses of true feeling, and their chief power, is to elude the personal notice of an audience, to escape into their parts, and hide themselves under the hood of their assumed character. Their most graceful self-possession is in fact a self-forgetfulness; an oblivion alike of self and of spectators. For this reason your most approved epilogue-speakers have been always ladies who have possessed least of this self-forgetting quality; and I think I have seen the amiable actress in question suffering some embarrassment when she has had an address of this sort to deliver; when she found the modest veil of personation, which had half hid her from the audience, suddenly withdrawn, and herself brought without any such qualifying intervention before the public.

I should apologise for the length of this letter, if I did not remember the lively interest you used to take in theatrical performances.—

I am, &c. &c.,

[I include this letter among the correspondence, because there is no positive proof that Lamb intended Gutch to print it in his paper, *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, where it appeared on 30th January 1819, and also because it paves the way to the remarkable letters to Miss Kelly to which we shall shortly come.

I have set the letter here from the Bristol paper, but it has usually been taken from the *Examiner*, into which Hunt copied it in the numbers for 7th and 8th July 1819, with the comment: 'We should have guessed the masterly and cordial hand that wrote them had we met with it in the East Indies.'

More will be said of Miss Kelly later, but here I would mention that Lamb, whose devotion was about to ripen into something warmer, had begun his admiration some time earlier. We have seen him, in a letter to Mrs. Wordsworth a year before, referring to 'a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face' while there was a sonnet in his *Works*, 1818, in praise of her genius.

John Mathew Gutch, who lent Lamb the edition of Wither, became proprietor of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* in 1803. Miss Kelly was at Bath in 1819 at the end of January and first half of February.

'Our old play-going days.' The Lambs lodged with Gutch, who was then a law stationer, at 27 Southampton Buildings, in 1800. Lamb was there alone for some time, during his sister's illness, and it is probably to this period that he refers.

'Mrs. Jordan.' Dorothea Jordan (1762-1816) was the greatest comedienne of her time; she left the London stage in 1814. Miss Kelly played many of her parts.

'Dodd and Parsons.' James William Dodd (? 1740-96), famous for his Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, which Lamb extols in 'The Old Actors.' William Parsons (1736-95), the comedian. Foresight in Congreve's *Love for Love* was one of his best parts.

'Smith or Jack Palmer.' William Smith (? 1730-1819), known as Gentleman Smith. Lamb perhaps saw him on the night of 18th May 1798, his sole



appearance for ten years; otherwise his knowledge of his acting could be but small. On that occasion Smith played Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal*, Joseph Surface being Jack Palmer's great part (see the *Elia* essay on 'The Artificial Comedy,' for an analysis of Palmer's acting).

'Miss Kelly.' Frances Maria Kelly (1790-1882) made her début at the age of seven in *Bluebeard* (the music by her uncle, Michael Kelly), at Drury Lane, in 1798. She was enrolled as a chorister of Drury Lane in 1799. She made her farewell appearance at Drury Lane in 1835.

'Yarico.' In *Inkle and Yarico*, 1787, by George Colman the younger (1762-1836).

'A Phoebe or a Dinah Cropley.' Phoebe, in *Rosina*, by Mrs. Frances Brooke (1724-89). I do not find a Dinah Cropley among Miss Kelly's parts. She played Dinah Primrose in O'Keeffe's *Young Quaker*—Lamb may have been thinking of that.

'The Merry Mourners.' *Modern Antiques; or, The Merry Mourners*, 1791, by John O'Keeffe. It was while playing in this farce on 17th February 1816 that Miss Kelly was fired at by a lunatic in the pit. Some of the shot is said to have fallen into the lap of Mary Lamb, who was present with her brother.

'Inebriation in Nell.' Nell, in *The Devil to Pay*, 1731, originally by Charles Coffey (d. 1745), but much adapted. Nell was one of Mrs. Jordan's great parts.

'Our friend C.' Coleridge, who was also at Christ's Hospital with Gutch. He says, in *Biographia Literaria*: 'Men of letters and literary genius are too often what is styled in trivial irony "fine gentlemen spoilt in the making." They care not for show and grandeur in what surrounds them, having enough within . . . but they are fine gentlemen in all that concerns ease and pleasurable, or at least comfortable, sensation.' In one of his lectures on 'Poetry, the Drama, and Shakespeare,' in 1818, Coleridge says: 'As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless'; which is the reverse of Lamb's recollection.]

## 230. TO WILLIAM HONE

[No date: Probably *January or February 1819.*]

DR SIR,

The parody I was mentioning of Terence is in page 271 the Latin & 273 the English—marked with a Pencil—

I will call for Terence as I go by in a day or two.—I cannot read Aristophanes, but he is understood to be full of parodies on Euripides &c.

The Splendid Shilling & the like are to be consider'd I think rather as Parodies of General Heroic Style, than of particular Passages. Tom Thumb has both.

Yours

C. LAMB.

[The first letter to William Hone (1780-1842), the antiquary, bookseller, and publisher, for whom Lamb later did much gratuitous work. Hone had not long since come triumphantly out of his trial for blasphemy, and public

sympathy had resulted in a useful gift of money, with which he established himself in premises on Ludgate Hill, and where he issued his successful skit, *The Political House that Jack Built*, 1819. Lamb was helping him towards his *History of Parody*, which, however, never took shape, although subscriptions for it were invited. *The Splendid Shilling* was by John Philips, and *Tom Thumb* by Henry Fielding.]

## 231. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*This letter is written in black and red ink, changing with each line.*]

P.M. 26th April 1819.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I received a copy of Peter Bell a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced, and then the price. Sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* Peter Bell, but a Peter Bell which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from supplementary preface to the Lyrical Balads. Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! he has been re-writing your Poem of the Stride, and publishing it at the end of his 'Human Life.' Tie him up to the Cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious P. B. I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers—the vile Smiths—but I have heard no name mentioned. Peter Bell (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter, I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. Hartleap Well is the tale for me, in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add the Waggoner? Have I thanked you, though, yet, for Peter Bell? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say any thing to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to tease him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him, he is generally writing, or thinking he is writing, in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away.

The mock P. B. had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find *something* diverting in it, I reach'd your two books off the shelf and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the Excursion. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond and fishing up a dead author whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary Bells. There is no Cock for such Peters. Damn 'em. I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse.

I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D.—A. I am sure will value it and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any bodie's, and god bless him, any bodie's as good as his own, for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The Gods by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided Curiosity also, and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you—on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust, but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a Pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different Poetical Works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again wherever I found it, shaking the adherencies off—and by this means one Copy of 'my Works' served for G. D. and with a little dusting was made over to my good friend Dr. Stoddart, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my Town acquaintance I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two Inks? I think it is pretty and mottley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you.

[*The ink differs with every word of the following paragraph :*]

My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you and cause to thrive and to burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly

CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

[The *Peter Bell* to which Lamb refers was written by John Hamilton Reynolds (1796-1852), the friend of Keats, and later Hood's brother-in-law. The parody is a travesty of Wordsworth generally rather than of *Peter Bell*, which had not then been published. James and Horace Smith, of the *Rejected Addresses*, which contained a parody of Wordsworth under the title *The Baby's Debut*, had nothing to do with it; and incidentally let me say that it would be interesting to know why Lamb held these two humorists in such contempt. Lamb's indignation about the parody was shared by Coleridge, who wrote as follows to Taylor & Hessey, the publishers, on 16th April 1819, on the announcement of Reynolds's work:

DEAR SIRS, I hope, nay I feel confident, that you will interpret this note in the real sense—namely, as a proof of the esteem and respect which I entertain toward you both. Looking in *The Times* this morning I was startled by an advertisement of PETER BELL—a Lyrical Ballad—with a very significant motto from one of our Comedies of Charles the II<sup>nd</sup>'s reign, tho' what it signifies I wish to ascertain. Peter Bell is a Poem of Mr. Wordsworth's—and I have not heard, that it has been published by him.—If it have, and with his name (I have reason to believe, that he never published anonymously) and thus now advertised be a ridicule on it—I have nothing to say—But if it have not, I have ventured to pledge myself for you, that you would not wittingly give the high respectability of your names to an attack on a *Manuscript* work, which no man could assail but by a base breach of trust.

It is stated in the article on Reynolds in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Coleridge asserted positively that Lamb was the objectionable parodist; but this letter suggests that that was not so. Possibly Coleridge's belief, later, that Lamb was the author of Hood and Reynolds's *Odes and Addresses* led to confusion. 'Peter Bell (not the mock one).' Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, in the original MS., for 6th June 1812, contains this passage:

With C. Lamb. Lent him *Peter Bell*. To my surprise he finds nothing in it good. He complains of the slowness of the narrative, as if that were not the *art* of the poet. W. says he has great thoughts, but *here* are none of them. He has no interest in the Ass. These are to me inconceivable judgments from C. L. whose taste in general I acquiesce in and who is certainly an enthusiast for W.

Again, on 11th May 1819, after the poem was published, Robinson says:

L. spoke of *Peter Bell*, which he considers as one of the worst of Wordsworth's works. The lyric narrative L. has no taste for. He is disgusted by the introduction, which he deems puerile, and the story he thinks ill told, though he allows the idea to be good.

'Rogers.' At the end of Samuel Rogers's poem, *Human Life*, 1819, is a ballad, entitled *The Boy of Egremond*, which has for subject the same incident as that in Wordsworth's *Force of Prayer*, beginning:

What is good for a bootless bene?

—the death of the Young Romilly as he leapt across the Strid. In Wordsworth the answer to the question is 'Endless sorrow.' Rogers's poem begins:

'Say what remains when hope is fled?'

She answered 'Endless weeping.'

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* was published a week after the mock one. To *The Waggoner* we shall come shortly.

The significance of the allusion to Coleridge's foolishness in writing about books is not perfectly clear; but it might refer to the elaborate examination of Wordsworth's poetry in the *Biographia Literaria*.

'These obtuse literary Bells.' Peter Bell, in the poem, sounds the river with his staff, and draws forth the dead body of the ass's master. Lamb passes, in his curse, to a reference to St. Peter.

'Taking my own again.' This may be adapted from a saying of Molière's: 'Il m'est permis de reprendre mon bien partout où je le trouve.' Voltaire, Mr. Rendall points out, also has: 'Je prendrai ce qui fut mien où je le trouverai'; but more likely than either the source was again Shakespeare: 'That every man should take his own.'—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. II. 459.]

## 232. TO THOMAS MANNING

May 28, 1819.

MY DEAR M.,

I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. C. Lloyd is in town with Mrs. LL. anxious of course to see you. She is come for a few days, and projects leaving him here in the care of a man. I fear he will launch out, and heartily wish the scene of his possible exploits were at a remoter distance. But she does not know what to do with him. He run away tother day to come to London alone but was intercepted & now she had brought him. I wish people wouldn't be mad. Could you take a run up to look at him? Would you like to see him? or isn't it better to lean over a style in a sort of careless easy half astronomical position eyeing the blue expanse? How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

Hail, Mackeray End—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature—who isn't at times? but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superotation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament;

some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native dye, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *nonsensorium*. But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf; the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. How is Ball? 'Mr. B. is a P——.' Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. Gold is well, but proves 'uncoined,' as the lovers about Wheathampstead would say.

O hard hearted Burrell  
With teeth like a squirrel—

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holiday in the fields a-Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk instead of your living trees! But then, again, I hate the Joskins, a *name for Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off, before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao.

C. LAMB.

[Charles Lloyd, resuming his literary activities, published in 1819 his *Nugæ Canoræ*, and mixed in London society, but after two or three years his mind again went astray.

Manning, who had now settled in England, but in retirement, was living in Hertfordshire, at Redbourne, between St. Albans and Wheathampstead.

The Gladmans and Brutons are mentioned in the *Elia* essay, 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire':

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackerel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farmhouse,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct.

The Goblin Page is in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

'Mrs. Gold is well.' *Né* Fanny Burrell.

'This dead wood of the desk.' Lamb used this figure more than once, in his letters and elsewhere. In the *Elia* essay, 'The Superannuated Man,' he says: 'I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.' And see the end of the letter to Wordsworth of 26th April 1815.

Here is part of Manning's instantaneous reply, with special reference to Mrs. Gould:

[P.M. 30th May 1819.]

DEAR LAMB,

I took all your letter very kindly, except the word *unroin'd*—as you & I have barred punning, I could not tell at first what to make of it—I'm afraid it will not pass current. I thought at first you alluded to her not being in a Family way. The phrase was familiar in Dryden's time—'stamp'd an image.' But what *interest* could you or I take in that? She's not likely to produce young Napoleons, I suppose! Then I exchanged that for another idea—but still *unfavorably*. Just as the circulating medium of my brain was at a standstill, & I feared I must let it a loan, lo! the restriction (on my understanding) was taken off, (it went off without any *report*) but still I take it *unkind* (of you—to puzzle me so). Nothing in this life, as you justly observe, is without alloy—not even uncoin'd Gold—but let's change the note. Who is that Mrs. Bruton—the 'glorious woman' you call her. Would you think it, I have  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mind to go over to Wethampsted, & inquire about her—only your notice is rather too vague. I know of but one Glorious Woman; & that is in the Revelations; & she wore the sun by way of a Brooch.

The letter continues with a reference to John Lamb the humanitarian and champion of eels.

. . . Take my word for it, to those that know how many yards of Chitterling go to a Dozen Sausages (learnt that phrase of Miss Halloway) no music like the cry of a killing pig. What does your Brother John say to it? He's a man of taste, he loves sausages. For my part I know no better eating, except it be eel-pye. There! there's a *flea* in his ear. Let him take care how he raps my Eels about the Costard!

Finally:

I should like to see Mrs. Lloyd very much, & so I should my Friend Charles if I thought I could see him as I wish: otherwise the thought oppresses me.

I cannot tell whether a visit from me would really gratify him or not. If I thought it would, I would come & see him directly. . . .

Mrs. Anderson suggests:

'Stampt an image.' Dryden, *Britannia Rediviva*:

And on their sacred anniverse decreed  
To stamp their image on the promised seed.

but there is a closer reference to Manning's meaning in the same poet's *Alexander's Feast*.

'Brooche.' Revelation xii. 1, but not accurate.

'The Costard.' 'Let him take care.'—*King Lear*, II. iv. 125, and IV. vi. 247.]

### 233. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 7th June 1819.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem—I mean all through—yet Benjamin is no common favorite—there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it—it is as good as it was in 1806—and will be as good in 1829 if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it.

Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication—but I will not enter into personal themes—else, substituting \*\*\*\*\* for Ben, and the Honble United Company of Merch<sup>ts</sup> trading to the East Indies for the Master of the misused Team, it might seem by no far fetched analogy to point its dim warnings hitherward—but I reject the omen—especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

Poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known (as I express'd it in a letter to Manning), man and mad man 27 years—he was my gossip in Leadenhall St.—but too much addicted to turn in at a red lattice—came wandering into his and my common scene of business—you have seen the orderly place—reeling drunk at nine o Clock—with his face of a deep blue, contracted by a filthy dowlas muckinger which had given up its dye to his poor oozy visnomy—and short to tell, after playing various pranks, laughing loud laughs three—mad explosions they were—in the following morning the 'tear stood in his ee'—for he found his abused income of clear £600 inexorably reduced to £100—he was my dear gossip—alas! Benjamin! . . .

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself [to] *him*) by the command of Hiero,



the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place? sic on my neglect of history—) conceive him by command of Hiero, or Perillus, set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean Panegyre in lines alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it—it would have been a strait laced torture to his muse, he would have call'd for the Bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, or the Chories (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets with points, Epilogues to Mr. H.s, &c. might be even benefited by the twy-fount. Where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme, I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre existence with 2 inks. Try another, and Rogers the Banker, with his silver standish having one ink only, I will bet my Ode on Tobacco, against the Pleasures of Memory—and Hope too—shall put more fervor of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two—he shall do it stans pede in uno as it were.

The Waggoner is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication—but that is a mechanical fault.

I re-read the White Doe of Rylston—the title should be always written at length—as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A—which makes me think, with some other triflings, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of Two Inks.

Manning had just sent it home and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it, 'I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsw<sup>th's</sup> poem. I am got into the 3rd Canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed. ✠ 'Tis broad; noble; poetical; with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the bible, &c.'—and so he goes on.

✠ N.B. M—— from his peregrinations is 12 or 14 years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late.

I do not know which I like best, the prologue (the latter part specially) to P. Bell, or the Epilogue to Benjamin. Yes, I tell stories, I do know. I like the last best, and the Waggoner altogether as a pleasanter remembrance to me than the Itinerant. If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.

The sonnets are not all new to me. Of what are, the 9th I like best.

Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favor done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedi—

I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If as you say, the Waggoner in some sort came at my call, O for a potent voice to call forth the Recluse from his profound Dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge The World.

Had I three inks I would invoke him!

Talfourd has written a most kind Review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the *Champion*. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabbe Robinson gives me any dear Prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not chusing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth had just put forth *The Waggoner*, which was dedicated to Lamb.

The poem, which had been written many years before, tells the story of Benjamin, a wagoner in the Lake county, who one stormy night, succumbing to the temptations of the Cherry Tree Inn, fell from good estate. Lamb's asterisks stand, of course, for Charles Lamb.

'Your stanzas on pre existence.' The *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*.

*The Pleasures of Hope* was Campbell's poem. *The Pleasures of Memory* by Rogers had, by that time, gone through many editions.

Mary Sabilla Novello was the wife of Vincent Novello, the organist, and Lamb's friend.

'Pindar.' Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, kept a brazen bull for the purpose of roasting criminals. Lamb has confused him with Perillus, the Athenian worker in metal, who made the bull. Lamb suggests that, to Pindar, insertion in the bull would have been less of a torture than writing with two inks.

'Stans pede in uno,' i.e. with great facility, a proverbial expression which Horace uses of the rapid dictation by Lucilius of his verses, *Satires*, I. iv. 10. In *The 'Lepus' Papers*, Lamb ranks standing on one leg with ignoble diversions.

*The White Doe of Rylstone* had been published in 1815.

The 9th sonnet. Certain sonnets had been published with *The Waggoner*. The ninth was that beginning:

Grief, thou hast lost an ever-ready Friend.

Wordsworth's sonnet upon Walton begins:

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport.

*The Recluse* was not published until 1888, and then only book i.

'Had I three inks.' 'Had I three ears . . . '—*Macbeth* IV. 1. 78.

The *Champion*, in which Talfourd reviewed Lamb's *Works*, had now become the property of John Thelwall.]

## 234. TO FANNY KELLY

[Dated at end: 9th July 1819.]

DEAR MISS KELLY,

If your Bones are not engaged on Monday night, will you favor us with the use of them? I know, if you can oblige us, you will make no bones of it; if you cannot, it shall break none betwixt us. We might ask somebody else, but we do not like the bones of any strange animal. We should be welcome to dear Mrs. Liston's, but then she is so plump, there is no getting at them. I should prefer Miss Iver's—they must be ivory I take it for granted—but she is married to Mr. xxx, and become bone of his bone, consequently can have none of her own to dispose of. Well, it all comes to this,—if you can let us have them, you will, I dare say; if you cannot, God rest your bones. I am almost at the end of my bon-mots.

C. LAMB.

[The free passes to the theatre were of bone or ivory.]

The letter that follows may be called the most interesting that Lamb ever wrote. He was then forty-four years of age and in receipt of a salary of £600. Fanny Kelly would be twenty-nine on 15th October. That Lamb had been pondering his offer for some little time is suggested, the late William Macdonald remarked, by a passage in one of his articles on Miss Kelly in the *Examiner* earlier in this month, where he says of her as Rachel, in *The Jovial Crew*, probably with full knowledge that it would meet her eye and be understood (a truly Elian method of love-lettering): "'What a lass that were,'" said a stranger who sate beside us . . . "to go a gipsying through the world with.'" And in the same paper, where Leigh Hunt would let Lamb put anything he wanted, I find, in the number for 20th December 1818 the following note, which I feel very confident was written by Lamb:

It was with a feeling of pain, that we observed Miss Kelly among the SPECTATORS on the first night of the new comedy. What does she do before the curtain? She should have been on the stage. With such youth, such talents.

Those powers of pleasing, with that will to please. It is too much that she should be forgotten, discarded, laid aside like an old fashion. It really is not yet the season for her 'among the wastes of time to go.' Is it Mr. — or the Sub-committee; or what Heavy Body is it, which interposes itself between us and this light of the stage?]

## 235. TO FANNY KELLY

20 July, 1819.

DEAR MISS KELLY,

We had the pleasure, *pain* I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore

from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied & hurried state.—But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, & come & be a reality to us? can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, & begin at last to live to yourself & your friends?

As plainly & frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind [was] once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect & deepest affection, I subscribe myself,

C LAMB.

[This was Miss Kelly's reply:

Henrietta Street, 20th July, 1819.

An early & deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus *frankly* & decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will

end with this letter, & that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much & so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend

F. M. KELLY.

Lamb at once wrote again as follows, in a far less steady hand than that in which the proposal was made:]

### 236. TO FANNY KELLY

July 20th, 1819.

DEAR MISS KELLY,

*Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisical no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns & that nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past 'break no bones' between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?

Yours very truly,

C. L.

Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N.B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your Book.

[Writing again of Miss Kelly, in *The Hypocrite*, in the *Examiner* of 1st and 2nd August, Lamb says: 'She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No*; to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life.'

Writing to her sister Lydia ten days after her reply to Lamb, Miss Kelly says: 'Yesterday I saw the Lambs for the first time, except from the stage, since his recent offer of marriage. I was indeed sorry to refuse him, for he shows the most tender and loyal affections. But even at the peril of my decision causing him great despondency, which I rather feared, I could have no other course than to say the truth that I could not accept his offer. I could not give my assent to a proposal which would bring me into that atmosphere of sad mental uncertainty which surrounds his domestic life. Marriage might well bring to us both added causes for misery and regrets in later years.'

This was Lamb's last excursion into the realms of romance; but Miss Kelly, although she never married, entered into a liaison some ten years later, and became the mother of an only daughter, born at Edinburgh early in April 1829, to whom the name Mary Ellen Thatcher Gerbine was given, afterwards changed to Greville, who inherited all Fanny Kelly's property. Miss Kelly died at the age of ninety-two in 1882.

See *Lamb's Barbara S—*, by L. E. Holman, 1935, for the full story of Miss Kelly's career.]

## 237. TO THOMAS HOLCROFT JUNIOR

[No date: *Autumn 1819.*]

DR. TOM,

Do not come to us on Thursday, for we are moved into country lodgings, tho' I am still at the India house in the mornings. See Marshall and Captain Betham *as soon as ever you can*. I fear leave cannot be obtained at the India house for your going to India. If you go it must be as captain's clerk, if such a thing could be obtain'd.

For God's sake keep your present place and do not give it up, or neglect it; as you perhaps will not be able to go to India, and you see how difficult of attainment situations are.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Addressed] By favour of Mr. W. Godwin, Jnr.

[It would seem that young Holcroft, the son of Lamb's friend, lost his place, which was some small parliamentary post under Rickman, in November 1819—as the following letter proves. I put it here as it applies to the matter in hand:]

## 238. TO BASIL MONTAGU

Dated: *November 7 [1819].*

DEAR MONTAGU,

I must beg you most earnestly if you have any writing business to give away, that you will think of poor Tom Holcroft, who is entirely out of employ & thrown upon the wide Town, with nothing to do. He is a lad of fine spirit, and has an appetite disproportionate to his finances. He will most gladly take any copying work, Attorney's work or anything. I conjure you to do what you can for him. His prime object is to go out to his brother in India, but meantime he utterly wants subsistence. You will say I never write to you, but when I want a favour. I was most sorry to hear that Mrs. M. has been unwell, & we should have called to day, but are going out for all day. Tom's lodgings are at a Snuffshop ? fetter Lane. May I send him to you?

Yours sincerely

C. LAMB.

[Later, Crabb Robinson, Anthony Robinson, and Lamb took up the matter and subscribed money, and Holcroft went out to India.

We come now to a problem which confronts all editors of Lamb's correspondence. I refer to the letters to Thomas Allsop, who, in 1819, was a young man of twenty-four, a very generous and well-to-do silk merchant, who was

to become known as Coleridge's 'favourite disciple.' According to Crabb Robinson, the acquaintance between Allsop and Coleridge began when Allsop gave the poet £100 in admiration of his genius. In his *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1836, Allsop tells us that the first night he ever spent with Lamb was after a visit to Coleridge, at Highgate, when, 'from something I had said or done of an unusual kind,' they returned by the same stage and Lamb put him up; and it was soon after then that Allsop contracted the habit of sending him game. The difficulty of placing correctly the many notes from Lamb to Allsop—more than fifty in all—is that Lamb, in addition to misspelling his new friend's name, was almost scrupulous in adding no date, and postmarks too rarely assist.

A number of undated missives follow.]

## 239-50. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

DR. SIR,

Your hare arrived in excellent order last night, and I hope will prove the precursor of yourself on Sunday.

Why you should think it necessary to appease us with so many pleasant presents, I know not.

More acknowledgm<sup>ts</sup> when we meet.

We dine at 3.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

DR. SIR,

We are most sorry to have miss'd you twice. We are at home tonight, tomorrow, & Thursday—& should be happy to see you any of these nights. Thanks for the shining Bird.

Yours truly

C. L.

MY DEAR SIR,

We shall hope to see you tomorrow evening to a rubber. Thanks for your very kind letter, and intentions respecting a bird.

Yours very truly,

C. LAMB.

DR. SIR,

You shall see us on Thursday, with M. B. [Martin Burney] possibly about 8. We shall have Tea-ed.

Yours truly,

C L

M. B.'s direction is 26 James Street. *James* not *St. James St.*

DEAR SIR,

The *hairs* of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage.

Yours gratefully

C. L.

DEAR ALLSOP,

Mary will take her chance of an early lunch or dinner with you on Thursday: She can't come on Wednesday. If I can, I will fetch her home. But I am near killed with Christmasing; and, if incompetent, your kindness will excuse me. I can scarce set foot to ground for a cramp that I took me last night.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

DEAR ALLSOP,

*Monday Evening.*

Your pheasant is glittering, but your company will be more acceptable this evening. Wordsworth is not with us, but the next things to him are.

C. LAMB.

### Ecce Iterum

DR. SIR,

I fear I was obscure. I was plaguily busy when those tempting birds came—I mean to say I could not come this Evening, but any other if I can know a day before, I can come for 2 or 3 afternoon hours for  $\frac{1}{2}$  four to  $\frac{1}{2}$  past six. at present I can not command more furlough. I have nam'd Satur<sup>d</sup> & will come, if you dont countermand, *I shall have dined.* I have been wanting not *not to see you.*

C. L.

[‘Ecce Iterum.’ ‘Here I am again.’ The words begin Juvenal’s fourth *Satire*.]

DR. SIR,

Thanks for the Birds and your kindness. It was but yesterd<sup>y</sup>. I was contriving with Talf<sup>d</sup> to meet you  $\frac{1}{2}$  way at his chamber. But night don’t do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by Eight.

I will-pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at ONE always, but I can spend an hour with you after that.

Yours truly

Would Saturd<sup>y</sup> serve?

C. L.



DEAR ALLSOP,

My injunctions about not calling here had solely reference to your being unwell, &c. at home. I am most glad to see you on my own account. I dine at 3 on either Sunday; come then, or earlier or later; only before dinner I generally walk. Your dining here will be quite convenient. I of course have a Joint that day. I owe you for News-papers, Cobbetts, pheasants, what not?

Yours Most Obligated, C. L.

P.S. I am so well (except Rheumatism, which forbids my being out on evenings) that I forgot to mention my health in the above. Mary is very poorly yet. Love to Mrs Allsop.

DEAR SIR,

We expected you here to-night; but as you have invited us to-morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by 8, and shall have taken Tea.

Your (not obliging but obliged),

C. and M. LAMB.

DEAR SIR,

I have brought you Rosamund, Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party, on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it. Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[The Bishop of Llandaff was William Watson.]

## 251. TO JOSEPH COTTLE

DEAR SIR,

[Dated at end: 5th November 1819.]

It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of 'Likenesses of Living Bards' which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections, and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 44 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it safely the instant the Copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty

From an old friend

and well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB.

[Lamb's visit to Bristol was made probably when he was staying at Calne with the Morgans in 1816. The present letter refers to an extra-illustrated copy of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was being made by William Evans, of the *Pamphleteer*, and which is now in the British Museum. Owing to Cottle's hostility to Byron, and Byron's scorn of Cottle, Lamb could hardly explain the nature of the book more fully. See note to the following letter.

Mrs. Anderson's note says that Cottle's reply ran thus:

Joseph Cottle sends a hasty line to his Old Friend Charles Lamb, to say that he will comply with his request, by sending his portrait in about a fortnight.

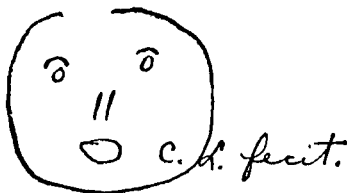
It would have given J. C. the sincerest pleasure to have C. L. at the time he mentioned. If ever he should come again to Bristol, he hopes he will allow him to testify some of those civilities which accord so much with his wishes.

Bristol, Brunswick Sqr. Nov. 22nd 1819.

The following is a fragment of a letter seemingly addressed by Lamb to William Evans:]

#### 252. TO WILLIAM EVANS (?)

P.S. Mr. White has a catalogue which he will be happy to shew you of prints to illustrate *English Bards & Scotch Reviewers*, which are to be sold in a few days at Leigh & Sotheby. Have you heard of 'em? I send you a portrait of Joseph Cottle from memory.



The lips should be a little thicker & perhaps the left eye has hardly justice done it but I should only spoil it by tampering with it.

#### 253. TO JOSEPH COTTLE

DEAR SIR,

[Not dated: ? Late 1819.]

My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, having had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited Drawing it is, as every one thinks that has seen it—the copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R.A.)—he purposes sending you back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favor, the 'Messiah,' which, I assure you, I have

read thro' with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness and a New Testament plainness about them which affected me very much.

I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and '2, and had ended the period with

The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—  
When to be heard again on Earthly ground?—

two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68, 'I come ordained a world to save,'—these words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the Baptismal Candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopt, was coeval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will ever see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L.

My sister joins in cordial remembrances and I request the favor of knowing, at your earliest opportunity, whether the Portrait arrives safe, the glass unbroken &c. Your glass broke in its coming.

Morgan is a little better—can read a little, &c.; but cannot join Mrs. M. till the Insolvent Act (or whatever it is called) takes place. Then, I hope, he will stand clear of all debts. Meantime, he has a most exemplary nurse and kind Companion in Miss Brent.

Once more, D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

Yours truly C. LAMB.

[Cottle sent Lamb a miniature of himself by Branwhite, which had been copied in monochrome for Mr. Evans's book. G. J. Joseph, A.R.A., made a coloured drawing of Lamb for the same work. Byron's lines in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* refer compositely both to Joseph and Amos Cottle:

Oh, Amos Cottle!—Phœbus! what a name,

and so forth. Mr. Evans, however, managed to get along without Amos. Another grangerized edition of the same satire, also in the British Museum, compiled by W. M. Tarrt, has an engraving of Amos Cottle and two portraits of Lamb—the Hancock drawing, and the Brook Pulham etched caricature. Byron's lines touching Lamb ran thus:

Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,  
The meanest object of the lowly group,  
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,  
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and Lloyd.

In the fifth edition Lamb lost his 'e'.

A footnote states that Lamb and Lloyd are 'the most ignoble followers of Southey & Co.'

Cottle's *Messiah*, of which the earlier portion had been published long before, was completed in 1815. Canon Ainger says that lines 71 and 72 in Lamb's copy (not that of 1815), following upon the couplet quoted, were:

(While sorrow gave th' involuntary tear)  
Had ceased to vibrate on our listening ear.

Coleridge's friend Morgan had just come upon evil times. Subsequently Lamb and Southey united in helping him to the extent of £10 a year each.]

## 254. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

DEAR SIR,

[No date: ? November 1819.]

I feel ashamed at this application to you. I have no right to make it. But I feel I cannot resist it. I have a God Son, a Nephew, a very fine youth, who is out of employ. The establishment with which he was connected is suddenly broke up. He wants employment. If by your city interest you could introduce him into any Clerkly employment, how much I should feel obliged! I hate myself for asking a favour. I would not for myself. Pray, believe me that if this is not in your power, never shall I cease to love and respect you.

C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This letter is of great interest, as, if Lamb really meant Nephew as we understand the word, he can only have referred to a natural son of his brother John, born, say, about 1800.']

## 255. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

DEAR SIR,

[Dated at end: 29th November 1819.]

Many thanks for your offer. I have desired the youth to wait upon you, if you will give him leave, that he may give his own answer to your kind proposal of trying to find something for him. My sister begs you will accept her thanks with mine. We shall be at home at all times, most happy to see you when you are in town. We are mostly to be found in an evening.

Your obliged,

Saturday, November 29, 1819.

C. LAMB.

END OF VOLUME ONE

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which has no repugnance, but a natural alliance with it, cannot fail. The mystery of the suspected relationship—the suspicion, generated from slight and forgotten circumstances, coming at last to act as Instinct, and so to be mistaken for Instinct—the son's unceasing pursuit and throwing of himself in his mother's way, something like Falkland's eternal persecution of Williams—the high and intricate passion in the mother, the being obliged to shun and keep at a distance the thing nearest to her heart—to be cruel, where her heart yearns to be kind, without a possibility of explanation. You have the power of life and death and the hearts of your auditors in your hands; still Harris will want a skeleton, and he must have it. I can only put in some sorry hints. The discovery to the son's friend may take place not before the 3d act—in some such way as this. The mother may cross the street—he may point her out to some gay companion of his as the Beauty of Leghorn—the pattern for wives, &c. &c. His companion, who is an Englishman, laughs at his mistake, and knows her to have been the famous Nancy Dawson, or any one else, who captivated the English king. Some such way seems dramatic, and speaks to the Eye. The audience will enter into the Friend's surprise, and into the perplexity of his situation. These Ocular Scenes are so many great landmarks, rememberable headlands and lighthouses in the voyage. Macbeth's witch has a good advice to a magic [? tragic] writer, what to do with his spectator.

*Show his eyes, and grieve his heart.*

The most difficult thing seems to be, What to do with the husband? You will not make him jealous of his own son? that is a stale and an unpleasant trick in Douglas, &c. Can't you keep him out of the way till you want him, as the husband of Isabella is conveniently sent off till his cue comes? There will be story enough without him, and he will only puzzle all. Catastrophes are worst of all. Mine is most stupid. I only propose it to fulfil my engagement, not in hopes to convert you.

It is always difficult to get rid of a woman at the end of a tragedy. *Men* may fight and die. A woman must either take poison, *which is a nasty trick*, or go mad, which is not fit to be shown, or retire, which is poor, only retiring is most reputable.

I am sorry I can furnish you no better: but I find it extremely difficult to settle my thoughts upon anything but the scene before me, when I am from home, I am from home so seldom. If any, the least hint crosses me, I will write again, and I very much wish to read your plan, if you could abridge and send it. In this little scrawl you must take the will for the deed, for I most sincerely wish success to your play.—Farewell,

C. L.

[This and Letter No. 98 that follows it contain Lamb's suggestions for Godwin's play *Faulkener*, upon which he was now meditating, but which was not performed until 1807. Lamb wrote the prologue, a poem in praise of Defoe, since it was in *Roxana*, or at least in one edition of it, that the counterpart to, or a portion of, Godwin's plot is found. There, however, the central figure is a daughter, not a son.

Swinburne, in the little article to which I have already alluded, says of this and the following letter: 'Several of Lamb's suggestions, in spite of his own modest disclaimer ("I am the worst hand in the world at a plot"), seem to me, especially as coming from the author of a tragedy memorable alike for sweetness of moral emotion and emptiness of theatrical subject, worthy of note for the instinctive intuition of high dramatic effect implied in their rough and rapid outlines.'

Richard Savage, the poet, whose life Johnson wrote, claimed to be the illegitimate son of Lady Macclesfield by Lord Rivers. Savage killed Sinclair in a tavern quarrel in 1727, and was condemned to death. His pardon was obtained by the Countess of Hertford.

*The Fair Penitent* is by Nicholas Rowe.

Falkland and Williams are in Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*, dramatized by Colman as *The Iron Chest*.

'Harris will want a skeleton.' Thomas Harris, stage manager of Covent Garden Theatre.

Nancy Dawson (1730?-67), the famous dancer and *bona roba*.

*Douglas*—Home's tragedy.

'The husband of Isabella.' In Southerne's *Fatal Marriage*.]

## 97. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Early October or end of September 1801.]

Pray what maps do you use, when you travel? Perhaps you have hit upon one that leaves London *out*.—Do let me send you down a complete set of Mercator's Charts, or Carrington Bowles's Survey of England, against you travel next. You certainly *imagined* that London had been in your road; and *mised me*.

White writes me word from the country, where he is gone to recruit his strength, that he goes groping in all the hedges and copses about Oxford among daisies, Kingcups, and pissabeds, for the seeds of poetry, which George Dyer will still have it are to be found there!—[*Letter torn.*]

He says that Sam. Taylor Coleridge appears to him as much as ever under the influence of a cold vanity, and does not spare absentem *rodere amicum*. Is my Latin correct? Pity, that such human frailties should perch upon the margin of Ulswater Lake. 'Pity,' say all the echoes in such a tone, so plaintive, I wish I had my flute. [*Words erased.*]

Lloyd's four brothers are grown choice Lads—they swagger about

Birmingham streets, and get drunk at Coffee houses, and beat the Watch—almost as great a metamorphosis to some of them, as the transformation of Roderick Random, the carrotty waggon-passenger and co-mate of Barber Strap [*words erased*] into a fine gent and [*letter torn*]

about town—ALL the world. [*Letter torn.*]

Do you trouble your head about Peace? or the Northern Confederacy? I want to know where you bestow your Interest—for every man has an interest, such as it is, in his breast—as Lord Hamlet says—‘every man has business and affairs.’—I feel as if I were going to leave off business—

Don’t mistake me, I only feel so just now. Sometimes I am very busy about nothing.

But seriously what do you think of this Life of ours? Can you make head or tail on’t? How we came here (that I have some tolerable bawdy hint of) what we came here for (that I know no more than [an] Ideot.)

You dropt a word whether in jest or earnest, as if you would join me in some work, such as a review or series of papers, essays, or anything.—Were you serious? I want some occupation, and I more want money. Had you any scheme, or was it, as G. Dyer says, *en passant*? If I don’t have a Legacy left me shortly, I must get into pay with some newspaper for small gains. Mutton is twelve-pence a pound.

There, there is a full three sides for you.—

C. L.

[‘*Absentem rodere amicum.*’ Horace denounces as a black sheep the man who slanders another behind his back. *Satires*, I. iv. 81.

‘The Peace.’ The battle of Copenhagen on 2nd April 1801 had broken up Napoleon’s northern alliance. This being followed by the death of the Czar Paul, the Treaty of Amiens on 25th March 1802 was in train and peace was prematurely celebrated. Such things would not interest Lamb.

‘Every man has business and affairs.’ A variation of *Hamlet*, I. v.]

## 98. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

(*Fragment*)

Margate, Sept. 17, 1801.

I shall be glad to come home and talk these matters over with you. I have read your scheme very attentively. That Arabella has been mistress to King Charles is sufficient to all the purposes of the story. It can only diminish that respect we feel for her to make her turn whore to one of the Lords of his Bed-chamber. Her son must not know that

she has been a whore: it matters not that she has been whore to a *King*: equally in both cases it is against decorum and against the delicacy of a son's respect that he should be privy to it. No doubt, many sons might feel a wayward pleasure in the honourable guilt of their mothers; but is it a true feeling? Is it the best sort of feeling? Is it a feeling to be exposed on theatres to mothers and daughters? Your conclusion (or rather Defoe's) comes far short of the tragic ending, which is always expected; and it is not safe to disappoint. A tragic auditory wants *blood*. They care but little about a man and his wife parting. Besides, what will you do with the son, after all his pursuits and adventures? Even quietly leave him to take guinea-and-a-half lodgings with *mamma* in Leghorn! O impotent and pacific measures! . . . I am certain that you must mix up some strong ingredients of distress to give a savour to your pottage. I still think that you may, and must, graft the story of *Savage* upon Defoe. Your hero must *kill a man* or *do some thing*. Can't you bring him to the gallows or some great mischief, out of which she *must* have recourse to an explanation with her husband to save him. Think on this. The husband, for instance, has great friends in Court at Leghorn. The son is condemned to death. She cannot tease him for a stranger. She must tell the whole truth. Or she *may* tease him, as for a stranger, till (like *Othello* in *Cassio's* case) he begins to suspect her for her importunity. Or, being pardoned, can she not tease her husband to get him banished? Something of this I suggested before. *Both* is best. The murder and the pardon will make business for the fourth act, and the banishment and explanation (by means of the *Friend* I want you to draw) the fifth. You must not open any of the truth to *Dawley* by means of a letter. A letter is a feeble messenger on the stage. Somebody, the son or his friend, must, as a *coup de main*, be exasperated, and obliged to tell the husband. Damn the husband and his 'gentlemanlike qualities.' Keep him out of sight, or he will trouble all. Let him be in England on trade, and come home, as *Biron* does in *Isabella*, in the fourth act, when he is wanted. I am for introducing situations, sort of counterparts to situations, which have been tried in other plays—*like* but not the *same*. On this principle I recommended a friend like *Horatio* in the 'Fair Penitent,' and on this principle I recommend a situation like *Othello*, with relation to *Desdemona's* intercession for *Cassio*. By-scenes may likewise receive hints. The son may see his mother at a mask or feast, as *Romeo*, *Juliet*. The festivity of the company contrasts with the strong perturbations of the individuals. *Dawley* may be told his wife's past unchastity at a mask by some witch-character—as *Macbeth* upon the heath, in dark sentences. This may stir his brain, and be forgot, but come in aid of strong proof hereafter. From

this, what you will perhaps call whimsical way of counterparting, this honest stealing, and original mode of plagiarism, much yet, I think, remains to be sucked. Excuse these abortions. I thought you would want the draught soon again, and I would not send it empty away.—Yours truly,

WILLIAM GODWIN!!!

Somers Town, 17th Sept., 1801.

[The reason for humorously signing this letter with Godwin's name and adding his address (Lamb, it will be noticed, was then at Margate) is that Godwin had (1) recently addressed to Lamb an unsigned letter, and (2) that he was exceedingly anxious that his name should not be mentioned as the author of the play.]

#### 99. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[No date: ? November 1801.]

A letter from G. Dyer will probably accompany this. I wish I could convey to you any notion of the whimsical scenes I have been witness to in this fortnight past. 'Twas on Tuesday week the poor heathen scrambled up to my door about breakfast time. He came thro' a violent rain with no neckcloth on, and a *beard* that made him a spectacle to men and angels, and tap'd at the door. Mary open'd it, and he stood stark still and held a paper in his hand importing that he had been ill with a fever. He either wouldn't or couldn't speak except by signs. When you went to comfort him he put his hand upon his heart and shook his head and told us his complaint lay where no medicines could reach it. I was dispatch'd for Dr. Dale, Mr. Phillips of St. Paul's Church yard, and Mr. Friend, who is to be his executor. George solemnly delivered into Mr. Friend's hands and mine an old burnt preface that had been in the fire, with injunctions which we solemnly vow'd to obey that it should be printed after his death with his last corrections, and that some account should be given to the world why he had not fulfill'd his engagement with subscribers. Having done this and borrow'd two guineas of his bookseller (to whom he imparted in confidence that he should leave a great many loose papers behind him which would only want methodizing and arranging to prove very lucrative to any bookseller after his death), he laid himself down on my bed in a mood of complacent resignation. By the aid of meat and drink put into him (for I all along suspected a vacuum) he was enabled to sit up in the evening, but he had not got the better of his intolerable fear of dying; he expressed such philosophic indifference in his speech and such frightened apprehensions in his physiognomy that if he had

truly been dying, and I had known it, I could not have kept my countenance. In particular, when the doctor came and ordered him to take little white powders (I suppose of chalk or alum, to humour him), he ey'd him with a *suspicion* which I could not account for; he has since explain'd that he took it for granted Dr. Dale knew his situation and had ordered him these powders to hasten his departure that he might suffer as little pain as possible. Think what an aspect the heathen put on with these fears upon a dirty face. To recount all his freaks for two or three days while he thought he was going, and how the fit operated, and sometimes the man got uppermost and sometimes the author, and he had this excellent person to serve, and he must correct some proof sheets for Phillips, and he could not bear to leave his subscribers unsatisfy'd, but he must not think of these things now, he was going to a place where he should satisfy all his debts—and when he got a little better he began to discourse what a happy thing it would be if there was a place where all the good men and women in the world might meet, meaning heav'n, and I really believe for a time he had doubts about his soul, for he was very near, if not quite, light-headed. The fact was he had not had a good meal for some days and his little dirty Neice (whom he sent for with a still dirtier Nephew, and hugg'd him, and bid them farewell) told us that unless he dines out he subsists on tea and gruels. And he corroborated this tale by ever and anon complaining of sensations of gnawing which he felt about his *heart*, which he mistook his stomach to be, and sure enough these gnawings were dissipated after a meal or two, and he surely thinks that he has been rescued from the jaws of death by Dr. Dale's white powders. He is got quite well again by nursing, and chirps of odes and lyric poetry the day long—he is to go out of town on Monday, and with him goes the dirty train of his papers and books which follow'd him to our house. I shall not be sorry when he take his nipt carcase out of my bed, which it has occupied, and vanishes with all his Lyric lumber, but I will endeavour to bring him in future into a method of dining at least once a day. I have proposed to him to dine with me (and he has nearly come into it) whenever he does not go out; and pay me. I will take his money beforehand and he shall eat it out. If I don't it will go all over the world. Some worthless relations, of which the dirty little devil that looks after him and a still more dirty nephew are component particles, I have reason to think divide all his gains with some lazy worthless authors that are his constant satellites. The Literary Fund has voted him seasonably £20 and if I can help it he shall spend it on his own carcase. I have assisted him in arranging the remainder of what he calls Poems and he will get rid of 'em I hope in another [*Here three lines are torn away at the*

*foot of the page, wherein Lamb makes the transition from George Dyer to another poor author, George Burnett].*

I promised Burnett to write when his parcel went. He wants me to certify that he is more awake than you think him. I believe he may be by this time, but he is so full of self-opinion that I fear whether he and Phillips will ever do together. What he is to do for Phillips he whimsically seems to consider more as a favor done to P. than a job from P. He still persists to call employment *dependence*, and prates about the insolence of booksellers and the tax upon geniuses. Poor devil! he is not launched upon the ocean and is seasick with aforethought. I write plainly about him, and he would stare and frown finely if he read this treacherous epistle, but I really am anxious about him, and that [? it] nettles me to see him so proud and so helpless. If he is not serv'd he will never serve himself. I read his long letter to Southey, which I suppose you have seen. He had better have been furnishing copy for Phillips than luxuriating in tracing the causes of his imbecillity. I believe he is a little wrong in not ascribing more to the structure of his own mind. He had his yawns from nature, his pride from education.

I hope to see Southey soon, so I need only send my remembrance to him now. Doubtless I need not tell him that Burnett is not to be foster'd in self-opinion. His eyes want opening, to see himself a man of middling stature. I am not oculist enough to do this. The book-sellers may one day remove the film. I am all this time on the most cordial supping terms of amity with G. Burnett and really love him at times: but I must speak freely of people behind their backs and not think it back-biting. It is better than Godwin's way of telling a man he is a fool to his face.

I think if you could do any thing for George in the way of an office (God knows whether you can in any haste (? case)], but you did talk of it) it is my firm belief that it would be his *only chance* of settlement; he will never live by his *literary exertions*, as he calls them—he is too proud to go the usual way to work and he has no talents to make that way unnecessary. I know he talks big in his letter to Southey that his mind is undergoing an alteration and that the die is now casting that shall consign him to honor or dishonour, but these expressions are the convulsions of a fever, not the sober workings of health. Translated into plain English, he now and then perceives he must work or starve, and then he thinks he'll work; but when he goes about it there's a lion in the way. He came dawdling to me for an Encyclopædia yesterday. I recommended him to Norris' library and he said if he could not get it there, Phillips was bound to furnish him with one; it was Phillips' interest to do so, and all that. This was true with some



restrictions—but as to Phillips' interests to oblige G. B.! Lord help his simple head! P. could by a *whistle* call together a host of such authors as G. B. like Robin Hood's merry men in green. P. has regular regiments in pay. Poor writers are his crablice and suck at him for nutriment. His round pudding chops are their *idea* of plenty when *in their idle fancies they aspire to be rich*.

What do you think of a life of G. Dyer? I can scarcely conceive a more amusing novel. He has been connected with all sects in the world and he will faithfully tell all he knows. Every body will read it; and if it is not done according to my fancy I promise to put him in a novel when he dies. Nothing shall escape *me*. If you think it feasible, whenever you write you may encourage him. Since he has been so close with me I have perceiv'd the workings of his inordinate vanity, his gigantic attention to particles and to prevent open vowels in his odes, his solicitude that the public may not lose any tittle of his poems by his death, and all the while his utter ignorance that the world don't care a pin about his odes and his criticisms, a fact which every body knows but himself—he is a *rum genius*. C. L.

[Dr. Dale would probably be Thomas Dale of Devonshire Square, Bishopsgate, who had a large city practice in those days. He died in 1816.

'An old burnt preface.' Lamb's copy of George Dyer's poems is in the British Museum. It has the original withdrawn 1800 title-page and the cancelled preface bound up with it, and Lamb has written against the reference to the sacrifice, in the new 1801 preface: 'One copy of this cancelled preface, snatched out of the fire, is prefaced to this volume.' See Letter 84.

The reference to Southey being in Dublin is explained by the fact that, through Rickman, he had been appointed private secretary to Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, at a salary of £400. He did not long retain the post, as it was vexatious and the duties very irregular.]

## 100. TO JOHN RICKMAN

January 9, 1802.

Please to send me *one* Letter with the *Broad Seal*, for a friend who is curious in impressions.

I am to be sure much gratified with your use of Margaret as a kind of rack to extract confession from women. But don't give me out as your Rack-maker, lest the women retort upon me the fate of Perillus, which you may read in your Ainsworth under the article Phalaris; or you may find the story more at large by perusing the Controversy between Bentley and Boyle. I have delayed to write (I believe I am telling a Lye) until I should get a book ready to send (but I believe this has been all along a

pretext recurred to, a kind of after-motive, when the resolution was taken a priori, rather than the true cause, which was mixed up of busy days and riotous nights, doing the Company's business in a morning, straining for Jokes in the afternoon, and retailing them (not being yet published) over punch at night. The Lungs of Stentor could not long sustain the Life I have led. I get into parties, or treat them with Pope Joan four times in a week. You have dropt in ere now when Norris was courting at such a Party, and you know the game. I stick to it like any *Papist*. 'Tis better than Poetry, Mechanics, Politics, or Metaphysics. That's a stop—there's pope—you did not take your ace—what a magic charm in sounds. I begin not to wonder at the bloodshed which dyed Christian Europe concerning Omousia and Omoiousia.—A party of people's *faces* about a fire grinning over cards and forgetting that they have got to go home is the supreme felicity, the Maximum Bonum. White has or is about to write you at my suggestion. We desire nothing so vigorously as to see Master Secretary in these parts. There are Liquors and fumes extant, which have power to detain a Bachelor from his cold Bed till cock crow.

Fenwick gives routs and balls and suppers (not balls) but splendid entertainments out of the first fruits of the *Plow*—he had some hundreds of pounds from unthinking Nobility. It is no breach of charity to suppose that part is expended—his wife and daughter have got magnificent Hats, which Mary waggishly has christen'd Northumberland Hats, from his great Patron at Charing Cross.

Dyer has at last met with a madman more mad than himself—the Earl of Buchan, brother to the Erskines and eccentric biographer of Fletcher of Saltoun. This old man of near eighty is come to London in his way to France, and George and he go about everywhere. George brought the mad Lord up to see me—I wan't at home but Mary was washing—a pretty pickle to receive an Earl in! Lord have mercy upon us! a Lord in my garret! My utmost ambition was some time or other to receive a Secretary! Well, I am to breakfast with this mad Lord on Sunday. I am studying manners. George and my Lord of Buchan went on Thursday last to Richmond on the Long Coach to pay their devotions to the shrine of Thomson! The coldest day in the year. Enough to cool a Jerusalem-Padder. George is as proud as a Turkey Cock and can talk of nothing else; always taking care to hedge in at the end that he don't value Lords, and that the Earl has nothing of the Lord about him. O human nature! human Nature! for my part I have told every Body, how I had an Earl come to see me. George describes the Earl as a very worthy man, who had his hobby horses; for instance, George says, he will stop you in the street, when you are

walking with him, and hold you by the button, and talk so loud, that all the Passers by look at you. So you may guess *why* he cleaves to George the first. If you have read the *Post*, you may have seen a dissertation on Cooke's Richard the 3d. which is the best thing I have done. It was in last Monday; stray Jokes I will not *mark*, hoping you will always take the good ones to be mine, and the bad ones to be done by John a Nokes, etc.

In haste. Happy New Year to Master Secretary.

C. L.

I had, before your injunction came, given a hint to the Goul, that you were disposed to serve him; this to rear him from the dreary state of despair he was in. But now, *num*. I wish to God you may do any thing: for all the Elements have fought against him.

My play will most likely accompany my *next*. Fell's goes on slow and sure, like his own long stories. It is *much, much*, better than I could believe. Some of it is very *good farce*, which is all a modern play need be.

[This very allusive letter contains one remark which bears upon Lamb's office hours and recalls a famous story. He says that he does Company's work in the morning and makes jokes for the newspapers in the afternoon. 'How late you come, Mr. Lamb!' said one of his India House superiors. 'Yes, but you should see how early I go,' was the reply.

'Your Ainsworth.' Robert Ainsworth's *Latin-English Dictionary*.

'Pope Joan.' This game has become obsolete, but survives to some extent in the form of Newmarket.

'Omousia' and 'Omoiousia.' The words refer to a dispute between the orthodox and Arian heretics of the fourth century as to the substance of the Father and the Son.

The Duke of Northumberland from whom Fenwick seems to have extracted the sinews of war for his latest journalistic venture, *The Plough*, was the second (1742-1817), who had been in command of the British forces in America, and was now flirting with politics, but could not work either with Pitt or Fox. Fenwick's career, as we shall see, was very near the end.

Dyer's Earl of Buchan was not so old as Lamb thought, being in 1802 only sixty. It was he who, later, gave Sir Walter Scott the sepulchral aisle of Dryburgh Abbey as a burial-place and plagued him with premature funereal courtesies when he was ill in bed. On the title-page of the earl's *Essays*, 1812, is a vignette of his 'Temple of the Muses erected at Dryburgh Abbey to the memory of Thomson and Burns,' a model of which may have been at Richmond.

Rickman was now lodged at Dublin Castle as Deputy Keeper of the Privy Seal under the Chief Secretary.

The Goul, also called by Lamb 'Simon:is-with-the-slit-lip,' was a gentleman named Simmonds, of unprepossessing appearance, who had been employed by Rickman at Whitehall.

Ralph Fell, author of a *Tour through the Batavian Republic*, and later of a *Life of Charles James Fox*, was writing a comedy, of which Lamb thought highly, though 'the serious parts are damn'd flat.')

## 101. TO JOHN RICKMAN

January 14, 1802.

You may suspect as much as you please (suspicion ever haunts the guilty mind) that I did not do that thing about Richard, but I tell you I did, and I also made the Lord Mayor's Bed, which you are welcome to rumple as much as you please. I plead guilty to certain 'felicities of phrase'—*Noviciate* used as an adjective I myself suspected, but did not know that *novice* was any other than a substantive. But what the devil's all this coil for about delightful artifices and elastic minds? and how should a man at Bantry Bay know any thing about good English? the fact is, that it was but an unfinished affair at first, and by the *intelligent artifice* of the Editor it was made more chaotic still. As it stands, it is more than half *introduction*: half of which was to be *note*. But it is most probably the last theatrical morceau I shall do: for they want 'em done the same night, and I tried it once, and found myself non compos. I can't *do* a thing against time. If I use 'do' and 'did' to excess, 'tis because I know 'em to be good English, that you can't deny. My Editor uniformly rejects all that I do considerable in length. I shall only do paragraphs, with now and then a slight poem such as 'Dick Strype,' if you read it, which was but a long Epigram. So I beg you not to read with much expectation, for my poor paragraphs do only get in, when there are none of any body's else. Most of them are rejected; all, almost, that are *personal*, where my forte lies. And I cannot get at once out of the delightful regions of scurrility, the 'Delectable Mountains' of *Albion* where whilom I fed my sheep, into the kickshaws of fashionable tittle-tattle, which I *must learn*. I cannot have the conscience to order a Paper for Xt Church, on the hypothesis that it is on my account (which is modest) for no paragraphs can be worth eight guineas a year. However I will try and see, if I can get it at an under price as you proposed.—I sent 'em Mottoes for 12th Day at their own desire—how did they serve me? the first day they put in mottoes by another (most stupid) hand, and the next day mottoes by ditto with some of mine tacked to 'em. They rejected a pretty good one on Dr. Solomon.

My namesake, sprung from Jewish Breeder,  
Knew *from* the Hyssop to the Cedar,  
But I, unlike the Jewish Leader,  
Scarce know the Hyssop *from* the Cedar.

Another of the rejected ones, on Count Rumford—

I deal in Aliments fictitious,  
And tease the Poor with soups nutritious;

Of bones and flint I make dilution,  
And belong to the National Institution.

Maybe you didn't see what were *in* of mine. The Best was

## ADDINGTON

I put my night cap on my head,  
And went as usual to my bed,  
And most surprizing to relate!  
I woke a Minister of State!

Another

## FRERE AND CANNING

At Eton School brought up with dull boys,  
We shone like *men* among the *school boys*;  
But since we in the world have been  
We are but *schoolboys* among men.

Your advice about getting a share of the *Post as fast as I can!!* I shall certainly follow. I wish I may hold my two guinea matter.

My scrawl costs you nothing; and me only so much Ink. Mary's Love. We are just setting out on a night expedition freezing (the glass at 23 as I *hear*, for I don't know a thermometer from a barometer) to Pentonville to see Mister Comedy Fell and his pretty spouse.

Yours etc.

C. L.

[The fantasy on the Lord Mayor's bed ran thus (*Morning Post*, 4th January 1802):

## THE FASHIONABLE WORLD

Ever since an account of the Marquis of Exeter's Grand State Bed appeared in the fashionable world, grandeur in this article of furniture has become quite the rage. Among others, the Lord Mayor, feeling for the dignity of the city of London, has petitioned the Corporation for one of great splendour to be placed in the Mansion House, *at the city's expence*.

We have been favoured with a description of this magnificent state bed, the choice of his Lordship. The body is formed by the callipee, or under shell of a large turtle, carved in mahogany, and sufficiently capacious to receive two well-fed people. The callipash, or upper shell, forms the canopy. The posts are four gigantic figures richly gilt: two of them accurate copies of Gog and Magog. The other two represent Sir William Walworth and the last man in armour. Cupids with custards are their supporters. The curtains are of mazarine purple, and curiously wrought with the series of the idle and the industrious apprentice from Hogarth in gold embroidery; but the *vallens* exceeds description; *there*, the various incidents in the life of Whittington are painted. The mice in one of the compartments are done so much to the life, that his Lordship's cat, which is an accurate judge of mice, was deceived. The quilt is of fashionable patchwork figures, the description of which we shall not anticipate, as we understand Mr. Birch has obtained a sketch of it for his large Twelfth-Cake. The whole is worthy of the taste of the first Magistrate of the first City in the World.

And here is *Dick Strype* (*Morning Post*, 6th January 1802):

DICK STRYPE  
OR, THE FORCE OF HABIT  
A TALE—BY TIMOTHY BRAMBLE

Habits are *stubborn things* :

And by the time a man is turn'd of *forty*  
His *ruling passion* 's grown so haughty  
There is no clipping of its wings.  
The amorous roots have taken earth, and fix:  
And never shall P—TT leave his juggling tricks,  
Till H—Y quits his metre with his pride,  
Till W—M learns to flatter regicide,  
Till hypocrite enthusiasts cease to rant  
And *Mister W—E* leaves off to cant.  
The truth will best be shewn,  
By a famous instance of our own.

DICK STRYPE

Was a dear friend and lover of the *pipe* ;  
He us'd to say, *one pipe of Kirkman's best*  
Gave life a *zest*.  
To him 'twas meat, and drink, and physic,  
To see the friendly vapour  
Curl round his midnight taper,  
And the black fume  
Clothe the room,  
In clouds as dark as *science metaphysic*.  
So still he smok'd, and diant, and crack'd his joke;  
And, had he *single* tarried  
He might have smok'd, and still grown oid in smoke:  
But RICHARD *married*.  
His wife was one who carried  
The *cleanly virtues* almost to a vice,  
She was so *nice* :  
And thrice a week, above, below,  
The house was scour'd from top to toe,  
And all the floors were rubb'd so bright,  
You dar'd not walk upright  
For fear of sliding:  
But that she took a pride in.  
Of all things else REBECCA STRYPE  
Could least endure a *pipe*.  
She rail'd upon the filthy herb tobacco,  
Protested that the noisome vapour  
Had spoil'd the best chintz curtains and the paper,  
And cost her many a pound in stucco:  
And then, she quoted our *King James*, who saith,  
'Tobacco is the Devil's breath.'  
When wives *will* govern, husbands *must* obey:  
For many a day  
DICK mourn'd and miss'd his favourite tobacco  
And curs'd REBECCA.

At length the day approach'd, his wife must die:  
 Imagine now the doleful cry  
 Of female friends, old aunts, and cousins,  
 Who to the fun'ral came by dozens,  
 The undertaker's men and mutes  
 Stood at the gate in sable suits,  
 With doleful looks,  
 Just like so many melancholy rooks.  
 Now cakes and wine are handed round,  
 Folks sigh, and drink, and drink, and sigh,  
 For Grief makes people dry:  
 But DICK is *missing*, no where to be found.  
 Above, below, about  
 They search'd the house throughout,  
 Each hole and secret entry,  
 Quite from the garret to the pantry,  
 In ev'ry corner, cupboard, nook and shelf,  
 And all concluded he had hang'd himself.  
 At last they found him—reader, guess you where—  
 'Twill make you stare—  
 Perch'd on REBECCA'S *Coffin*, at his rest,  
 SMOKING A PIPE OF KIRKMAN'S BEST.

I think that the similarity of the ending of these verses and the story called *Mr. Ephraim Wagstaff, his wife and Pipe*, in Hone's *Table Book*, signed 'Nemo,' may be taken as corroboration of Dykes Campbell's theory that Lamb was the author of that too.

The missing names at the beginning: William Pitt, William Hayley, William Wickham, William Wilberforce. If, however, the word in line 7 is not 'metre' but 'mitre,' then the name would be Hervey, Bishop of Derry.

As to the rejected epigrams, Solomon was a notorious quack, and Count Rumford was Benjamin Thompson (1753-1814), who, an American by birth, acquired a European reputation as a scientific investigator, and was the founder of the Royal Institution. He was best known by the invention of the Rumford stove. Lamb's epigram refers to his writings on cookery, by which he 'disseminated a knowledge of cheap and good dishes and foods.' In addition to receiving an English knighthood he was made a count by the Elector of Bavaria.]

## 102. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 15th February 1802.]

Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus, shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his storekeeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when

you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to St. Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? is it as good as hanging? are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of both sexes? Are you and the First Consul *thick*? All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure, but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordising recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you came to Paris; and your damn'd philosophical indolence or indifference stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil!—are men nothing but word-trumpets? are men all tongue and ear? have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble: no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why! thou damn'd Smell-fungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen (I forget how you spell it—it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would). It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure, which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know—the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a 'stronger man' armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken for known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a week at the 'Post,' and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est*; I must cut closer, that's all.



In all this time I have done but one thing, which I reckon tolerable, and that I will transcribe, because it may give you pleasure, being a picture of *my* humours. . You will find it in my last page. It absurdly is a first Number of a series, thus strangled in its birth.

More news! The Professor's Rib has come out to be a damn'd disagreeable woman, so much so as to drive me and some more old cronies from his house. If a man will keep snakes in his house, he must not wonder if people are shy of coming to see him because of the *snakes*.

Mister Fell—or as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr. F+ll—has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some friend has told him that it has not the least merit in it. Oh! that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos (Scriptores videlicet) ab amicis!* That's all the news. *A propos* (is it pedantry, writing to a French man, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? methinks, my thoughts fall naturally into it).—

*Apropos*, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene.

I will now transcribe the 'Londoner' (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end. I write small in regard to your good eyesight.

#### THE LONDONER. NO. I

In compliance with my own particular humour, no less than with thy laudable curiosity, Reader, I proceed to give thee some account of my history and habits. I was born under the nose of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and jussle in friendly opposition at Temple-bar. The same day which gave me to the world saw London happy in the celebration of her great annual feast. This I cannot help looking upon as a lively type or omen of the future great goodwill which I was destined to bear toward the City, resembling in kind that solicitude which every Chief Magistrate is supposed to feel for whatever concerns her interests and well-being. Indeed, I consider myself in some sort a speculative Lord Mayor of London: for, though circumstances unhappily preclude me from the hope of ever arriving at the dignity of a gold chain and spital sermon, yet thus much will I say of myself, in truth, that *Whittington* himself with his *Cat* (just emblem of *vigilance* and a *furred gown*), never

went beyond me in affection, which I bear to the citizens. Shut out from serving them in the most honourable mode, I aspire to do them benefit in another, scarcely less honourable; and if I cannot, by virtue of office, commit vice and irregularity to the *material Coughter*, I will, at least, erect a *spiritual one*, where they shall be *laid fast by the beels*. In plain words, I will do my best endeavour to *write them down*.

To return to *myself* (from whence my zeal for the Public good is perpetually causing me to digress), I will let thee, Reader, into certain more of my peculiarities. I was born (as you have heard), bred, and have passed most of my time, in a *crowd*. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had fixed my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man, while the *passion* is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows and purling streams. During this short period of my existence, I contracted just enough familiarity with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the *Poets*, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favour of a *country life*.

For my own part, now the *fit* is long past, I have no hesitation in declaring, that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury-Lane Theatre just at the hour of five, give me ten thousand finer pleasures, than I ever received from all the flocks of *silly sheep*, that have whitened the plains of *Arcadia* or *Epsom Downs*.

This passion for crowds is no where feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to *hypocondria*, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful Pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops, where Fancy (miscalled Folly) is supplied with perpetual new gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesmen—things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage, do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness. I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the

medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honour at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the tumultuous detectors of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than an hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man, in all ages, has leaned to order and good government. Thus an art of extracting morality, from the commonest incidents of a town life, is attained by the same well-natured alchemy, with which the *Foresters of Arden* in a beautiful country

Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing—

Where has spleen her food but in London—humour, interest, curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke—what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes?

Reader, in the course of my peregrinations about the great city, it is hard, if I have not picked up matter, which may serve to amuse thee, as it has done me, a winter evening long. When next we meet, I purpose opening my budget—Till when, farewell.

‘What is all this about?’ said Mrs. Shandy. ‘A story of a cock and a bull,’ said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won’t *shut his eyes*, and *open his mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape*, and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudable purpose of making me your register. I will render back all your remarks; and *I, not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishmen from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

*Allons*—or what is it you say, instead of *good-bye*?

Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me.

C. LAMB.

[Addressed to ‘Mr. Thomas Manning, Maison Magram, No. 342 Boulevard Italien, Paris.’]

The reference to the ‘word-banker’ and ‘register’ is explained by Manning’s first letter to Lamb from Paris, in which he says: ‘I . . . beg you to keep all my letters. I hope to send you many—and I may in the course of time, make some observations that I shall wish to recall to my memory when I return to England.’

‘Are you and the First Consul *thick*?’ Napoleon, with whom Manning was destined one day to be on terms. In 1803, on the declaration of war, when he wished to return to England, Manning’s was the only passport that Napoleon

signed; again, in 1817, on returning from China, Manning was wrecked in the Straits of Gaspar, and had to wait for a ship at Batavia, thence proceeding to St. Helena, where he conversed with the great exile.

'The Professor's Rib.' This was Lamb's pet aversion, the second Mrs. Godwin, the widow Clairmont, with a son and a daughter, Mary Jane, who was destined, and doomed, to meet Byron. Having taken the next house to the professor, Mrs. Clairmont started the campaign with the words: 'Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?' The answer being in the affirmative, she proceeded to annex him.

'Smell-fungus.' An allusion to Sterne's attack on Smollett, in *A Sentimental Journey*: 'The lamented Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris, from Paris to Rome, and so on; but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted.'

'The Post.' Lamb had been writing criticisms of plays; but Stuart, as we have seen, wanted them on the same night as the performance and Lamb found this impossible.

'Ludisti satis . . .' It should be *Lusisti*. From the end of Book II of the *Epistles* of Horace.

'I have done but one thing.' 'The Londoner,' referred to later.

'Apropos, I think you wrong about my play.' *John Woodvil* had just been published, and Lamb had sent Manning a copy. Manning, in return, had written from Paris early in February: 'I showed your Tragedy to Holcroft, who had taste enough to discover that 'tis full of poetry—but the plot he condemns *in toto*. Tell me how it succeeds. I think you were ill advised to retrench so much. I miss the beautiful Branches you have lopped off and regret them. In some of the pages the sprinkling of words is so thin as to be quite *outré*. There you were wrong again.'

'The Londoner' was published in the *Morning Post*, 1st February 1802. Concerning it Manning wrote, in his next letter—6th April 1802: 'I like your "Londoner" very much, there is a deal of happy fancy in it, but it is not strong enough to be seen by the generality of readers, yet if you were to write a volume of essays in the same stile you might be sure of its succeeding.' It would put the world still more in Manning's debt if we could attribute Lamb's subsequent activity as an essayist to this early suggestion.

'Found tongues in trees, etc.' *As You Like It*, II. i. 16.]

### 103. TO THOMAS MANNING

[23rd April 1802.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, 'the god-like face of the First Consul.' *What god* does he most resemble? Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted on Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a

tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than me, who am 'less than the least of the Apostles,' at least than they are painted in the Vatican. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your *séances* and *conversaziones*, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, 'bad as ours are,' is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégaqué* than Mr. Caulfield or Mr. Whitfield; but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess*? or can a Frenchman *laugh*? Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your tastes and morals are corrupt and perverted. By-and-by you will come to assert, that Buonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read 'Henry the Fifth' to restore your orthodoxy. All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor anything that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty, as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Something I will say about people that you and I know. Fenwick is still in debt, and the Professor has not done making love to his new spouse. I think he never looks into an almanack, or he would have found by the calendar that the honeymoon was extinct a moon ago. Lloyd has written to me and names you. I think a letter from Maison Magnan (is that a person or a thing?) would gratify him. G. Dyer is in love with an Ideot who loves a Doctor, who is incapable of loving anything but himself. A puzzling circle of perverse Providences! A maze as un-get-out-again-able as the House which Jack built. Southey is Secretary to the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; £400 a year. Stoddart is turned Doctor of Civil Law, and dwells in Doctor's Commons. I fear *his* commons are short, as they say.

Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen, a good girl and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin?

Under this cold marble stone  
Sleep the sad remains of one  
Who, when alive, by few or none

Was loved, as loved she might have been,  
 If she prosperous days had seen,  
 Or had thriving been, I ween.  
 Only this cold funeral stone  
 Tells she was beloved by one,  
 Who on the marble graves his moan.

Brief, and pretty, and tender, is it not? I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done*, since the muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor and company and wicked tobacco a'nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you who spiritualise upon Champagne may continue to write long letters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a will which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

C. LAMB.

['Even less than me.' W. C. Hazlitt gives, in his book, *Mary and Charles Lamb*, a vivid impression of Lamb's spare figure. A farmer at Widford, Mr. Charles Tween, himself not a big man, told Mr. Hazlitt that when walking out with Lamb he would place his hands under his arms and lift him over the stiles as if it were nothing. Napoleon's height was five feet six or seven inches.

Thomas Caulfield, a brother of the antiquary and print-seller, James Caulfield, was a comedian and mimic at Drury Lane; Whitfield was an actor at Drury Lane, who later moved to Covent Garden.

'Maison Magnan.' Hitherto spelt 'Magram.' Lamb was very casual with French.

'An Ideot' was Miss Bengier, I presume.

'An epitaph.' These lines are a eulogium upon Rickman's young friend, Mary Druitt, of Wimborne. They were printed in the *Morning Post* for 7th February 1804, signed C. L.]

104. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

September 8, 1802.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. We had Miss Buck's company nearly all the way. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going to a place and coming from it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in

love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the Lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementos are shelved in my brain. We past a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. Lloyd's hospitality is not extinct; it only was past into *them*. The Wordsworths are at Montagu's rooms, near neighbours to us. They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy Fair!

I shall put your letter in the penny post, and shall always do so, if you have no objection, for I don't want to see Stuart, our Dissolution was rather ambiguous and I am not sure he is not displeased. I was pleased to recognise your Blank verse Poem (the Picture) in the *Morning Post* of Monday. It reads very well and I feel some dignity in the notion of being able to understand it better than most Southern Readers.

I hope you got over the fatigue of Helvelling. I shall expect little notes now and then to accompany yours to Stuart, which will pay me for the pang I must feel! in defrauding the Company. Mind, if you think the Penny Post not safe or had otherwise rather I dropt 'em in myself, I will, but I hate to encounter that impudent Clerk.

I yesterday hunted about at Lackington's, &c., for Milton's *Prose Works*, which if I could have got reasonably I should have beg'd your acceptance. The only one I met with, the best Quarto, was 6 guineas—But I don't despair.

Observe the Lambe (but don't mark it) on those letters I am not to open.

My next letter I hope will contain some account of our commissions.

I am hurrying this off at my office where I am got for the first time to-day, and very awkward I feel and strange at Business. I forget the names of Books and feel myself not half so great a man as when I [was] a scambler among mountains. I feel debased; but I shall soon break in my mountain spirit.

Particularly tell me about little *Pi-pos* (or flying Opossum) the only child (but one) I had ever an inclination to steal from its parents. That one was a Beggar's brat that I might have had cheap. I hope his little Rash has gone.

But don't be jealous. I have a very affectionate memory of you all, besides *Pi-pos*: but *Pipos* I especially love.

Remember me kindly to Hartley and Hartley's old friends at Greta Hall and very kindly to Sara. I may venture to add Mary's love, I am sure, tho' she does not sit beside me. Public offices scare away familiar faces and make ugly faces too familiar. Have you seen Stoddart and Allen? We past S. on the road.

God bless you all.

C. L.

[In the summer of 1802 the Lambs paid a sudden visit to Coleridge at Keswick. Afterwards they went to Grasmere, although the Wordsworths were away from home; but they saw Thomas Clarkson, the philanthropist, then living at Ullswater (see the next letter). They had reached London again on 5th September. Procter records that on being asked how he felt when among the lakes and mountains, Lamb replied that in order to bring down his thoughts from their almost painful elevation to the sober regions of life, he was obliged to think of the ham-and-beef shop near St. Martin's Lane.

The Clarksons were Thomas Clarkson, the philanthropist, and his wife. Miss Buck was Mrs. Clarkson's sister.

It was with Basil Montagu, the lawyer, that the Wordsworths were staying in London.

Pi-pos was Lamb's name for little Derwent Coleridge.]

#### 105. TO THOMAS MANNING

24th Sept., 1802, London.

MY DEAR MANNING,

Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly never intend to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme, (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed Peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice; for my time being precious did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into Fairy Land. But that went off (as it never came again—while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an im-



pression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half-bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married to a girl of small fortune, but he is in expectation of augmenting his own in consequence of the death of Lord Lonsdale, who kept him out of his own in conformity with a plan my lord had taken up in early life of making everybody unhappy. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater—I forget the name—to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about, and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-Street and the

Strand are better places to live in for good and all than among Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year—two, three years—among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think: *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, the glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant!—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard; but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono*), is turned editor of a 'Naval Chronicle.' Godwin (with a pitiful artificial wife) continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That Bitch has detached Marshall from his house, Marshall the man who went to sleep when the 'Ancient Mariner' was reading: the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. How I hate *this part* of a letter. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. LAMB.

[The Lake visit requires a little annotation. Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), the anti-slavery agitator, was then living at Eusemere, on Ullswater. Lord Lonsdale's debt was to Wordsworth's father, and had been repudiated, but his heir, his cousin William, on succeeding to the estates, paid it in full, with interest. It was to him that Wordsworth dedicated, in 1814, *The Excursion*. By the phrase, 'the Wordsworths,' Lamb means William and his sister Dorothy. The poet married, on 4th October 1802, Mary Hutchinson, aged thirty-two,

who had been his schoolfellow at Penrith, and was now keeping house for her uncle, a farmer at Gallon Hill, near Scarborough.

Marshall we met in the letters to Godwin of 14th December 1800, and to Manning, 16th December 1800.

'Nam hic cæstus . . . ' Virgil, *Æneid*, v. 484: Of the boxer who has fought his last fight. For here I lay down my gloves and the game.

'Holcroft.' Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), a miscellaneous writer, who is best known by his play, *The Road to Ruin*, or by his *Memoirs*, reprinted in the *World's Classics*. They were finished by Hazlitt. Lamb says of him in his 'Letter to Southey' that he was 'one of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men' that he had ever met.]

106. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

October 9, 1802.

CAROLUS AGNUS COLERIDGIO SUO S.

CARISSIME

Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductitio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellere studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut *Ædes* istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentâ magistri improbâ [? improbi] bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrâ supràque olim penitus imbutus fui Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde quæsiis valde dehonestaverò [sic]. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste igitur, quotquot esis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Dîis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subito natales [nates], et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.

Ista tua Carmina Chamouniana satis grandia esse mihi constar; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosonum inter se responsiones totidem reboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audiavi tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare docentes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

Idem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et mentem irritabilem istam Julianam: et etiam astutias frigidulas quasdam Augusto propriiores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedis-

affirmaveris: necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco solícite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cùm universi Duodecim ad comparationes tuas se ultro rulerint? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundii* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimium, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam 'beata inter mulieres': et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum Angelo Salutatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cælo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipsi Musicolæ: at Wordsworthium Musarum obervantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hæc novâ, Dorothea, gratulor: et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo: nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ, ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare? Quæso ego materiam ludi: tu Bella ingeris.

Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas: facias ut oppossum illum nostrum volantem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleii nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego: vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progredi [? progredi] non liquet: homo sum æratus.

P.S.—Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum a Johanno Milto Latino scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis libris ocyùs per Maria [?] ad te missura [*sic*] curabo; sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *festinantem* novisti: habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici [*sic*] restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Pop<sup>o</sup>. Ang<sup>o</sup>. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

Jussa tua Stuartuna faciam ut diligenter colam.

Iterum iterumque valeas:

Et facias memor sis nostri.

[I append a translation from the pen of Mr. Stephen Gwynn:

CHARLES LAMB TO HIS FRIEND COLERIDGE, GREETING

DEAR FRIEND

> You write that I am to pay my debt, to wit in coin of correspondence, and finally that I am to go to Tartarus: no but it is you have caught a Tartar (as the saying is), since after all these years employing my own vernacular tongue, and prettily enough for a hired penman, you have set about to drive me by means of your well composed and neatly turned epistles to gross and almost

doggish barking in the Latin. Still, I will try: And yet I fear that the Hostel of our Christ,—wherein by the exceeding diligence of a relentless master I was in days gone by deeply imbued from bottom to top with polite learning, instilled as it were by a clyster—which still glories in the names of the erudite Barnes and Markland, will be vilely dishonoured by my outlandish and adscititious barbarisms. But I am determined to proceed, no matter whither. Be with me therefore all ye troops of conjugations and declensions, dread spectres, and approach thou chiefest, Shade and Phantom of the disused (thank Heaven) Birch, at whose entry to my imagination a sudden shiver takes my rump, and a trifle the more would make me begin to let down my breeches to my calves, and turning boy, howl boyishly.

That your Ode to Chamounix is a fine thing I am clear; but here is a thing offends me somewhat, that in the ode your answers of the Grison mountains to each other should so often echo in English God, God—in the very tone that I have heard your own lips teaching your Cumbrian mountains to resound Tod, Tod, meaning the unlucky doctor—a syllable assuredly of no Godlike sound. For the rest, I approve.

Moreover, I certainly recognize that your comparisons are acute and witty; but what has this to do with truth? since you have given to the great Consul at once that irritable mind of Julius, and also a kind of cold cunning, more proper to Augustus—attributing incongruous characteristics in one breath for the sake of your comparison: nay, you have even in the third instance laboriously drawn out some likeness to Tiberius. What had you to do with one Cæsar, or a second, when the whole Twelve offered themselves to your comparison? Moreover, I agree with antiquity, and think comparisons odious.

Your Wordsworth nuptials (or rather the nuptials of a certain Edmund of yours) fill me with joy in your report. May you prosper, Mary, fortunate beyond compare, and perchance comparable to that ancient Virgin Mary (a comparison more than Cæsarean) since 'blessed art thou among women': perhaps also it will be no impiety to compare Wordsworth himself your husband to the Angel of Salutation, since (like the angel) from heaven descend both Muses and the servants of the Muses: whose devoutest votary I always know Wordsworth to be. Congratulations to thee, Dorothea, in this new alliance: you also assuredly are another 'gift of God.'

As for that game with America you talk of, Coleridge, I pass it by as quite unfit for a game, as games go. For, tell me, what 'fun' is there in wickedly estranging the whole Columbian people from our people, who are of the same stock, for the sake of a single *jeu d'esprit*? I seek the material for fun, and you press War upon me.

Finally, fare you well, and pray tell me what you think of my Latinity. Kindly wish health and beauty from me to our flying possum or (as you prefer to call it) roving Fish. Good health to your wife and my friend Hartley. My sister and I are well. She also sends you greeting. I do not see how to get on farther: I am a bankrupt.

P.S.—I had almost forgot, I have by me two volumes of the Latin writings of John Milton, which (D.V.) I will have sent you sooner or later by sea: but you know me no way precipitate in this kind: the accused pleads guilty. This only remains to be said, that the aforesaid volumes are handsome and contain all the Latin works of J. M. At present I dwell with much delight on his vigorous defence of the English people.

I will be sure to observe diligently your Stuartial orders.  
Again and again farewell: and pray be mindful of me.

Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chumouni*, was printed in the *Morning Post* for 11th September 1802. The poem contains this passage:

God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,  
 Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!  
 God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!  
 Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!  
 And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,  
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Canon Ainger suggests, that by Tod, the unlucky doctor, Lamb meant Dr. William Dodd (1729-77), the compiler of the *Beauties of Shakespeare*, and the forger, who was hanged at Tyburn. This is so. Coleridge, in one of his journals, Mrs. Anderson points out, expressly says he made the mountains echo the name of Dr. Dodd.

'Your comparisons.' Coleridge's *Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome under Julius and Augustus Cæsar* was printed in the *Morning Post*, 21st September, 25th September, and 2nd October 1802. See *Essays on his Own Times*, 1850, vol. II, page 478.

Wordsworth's marriage to Mary Hutchinson, on 4th October 1802, had called forth from Coleridge his ode on *Dejection*, printed in the *Morning Post* for the same day, in which Wordsworth was addressed as Edmund. In later editions Coleridge suppressed its personal character. Dorothea was, of course, Wordsworth's sister Dorothy.

'Stuartial.' Referring to Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post*.]

#### 107. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 11th, 1802.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind; but I do not think it a wise speculation, because the time it would take you to put them into prose would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed, I am sure you could do the one nearly as soon as the other; so that, instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things of a light nature to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of your assiduity. 'Bishop Hall's Characters' I know nothing about, having never seen them. But I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; for as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedlar, for him to pick out, and tumble about my ribbons and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have anything unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

It was quite a slip of my pen, in my Latin letter, when I told you I had Milton's Latin Works. I ought to have said his Prose Works, in two volumes, Birch's edition, containing all, both Latin and English, a fuller and better edition than Lloyd's of Toland. It is completely at your service, and you must accept it from me; at the same time, I shall be much obliged to you for your Latin Milton, which you think you have at Howell's; it will leave me nothing to wish for but the 'History of England,' which I shall soon pick up for a trifle. I will send you the Milton with any choice books you may want from Howell's per wagon, or if you prefer it all your books by sea; but I suppose in the latter case there is a hazard of their not coming to hand. Wordsworth has got the oilsilk you bespoke. Mary did not make it up for fear of not doing it right, and you must have soles of Cork or something to your feet, or you will rub the silk to pieces the first time of using: these she did not know how to put on: or I promise you she would not have spared any trouble. Wordsworth has also some snuff for you secundum recipe—and he forgot to take, what we still have for you, a black Cap: but you must write me word whether the Cap and Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for the fantastic debt of 15*l.*, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progređiri* or *progređi* I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands—the *epistolarii nummi*.

I had one reason for writing now—what you will be extremely glad to hear. I have just received intelligence, that Billy Winch is doing extremely well. He went out to India on the Bengal Establishment as Cadet, and is come to be a Lieutenant, he is extremely respected, has learned the language, and is thought a clever man. The Rogue was courting his Colonel's daughter, when my informer heard last of him. He had not any encouragement from the family; but the esteem he was

in secured him from any mortifying repulse.—My authority is a good-natured young man, who was a little time at Xts, is now in the India House, Robinson: he says he and his father travelled into Devonshire with you, and you were very kind to him.

Your 'Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany' is admirable. Take 'em all together, they are as good as Harrington's. I will muster up all the conceits I can, and you shall have a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger (like Homer in the Battle of the Books) at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently. As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs. Green of Christ's Hospital! Lloyd has written me a fine letter of friendship all about himself and Sophia and love and cant: which I have not answered; but it will be done very plainly and sincerely without acrimony. For the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pīpos and his friends.

C. LAMB.

[Coleridge, who seems to have been asked by Stuart of the *Morning Post* for translations of German verse, had suggested, I presume, that he should supply Lamb (who knew no German) with literal prose translations, and that Lamb should versify them, as he had in the case of *Thekla's Song* in Coleridge's translation of the first part of *Wallenstein* nearly three years before. Lamb's suggestion is that he should send to Stuart epigrams and paragraphs in Coleridge's name. Whether or not he did so, I cannot say.

Bishop Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* was published in 1608. Coleridge may have suggested that Lamb should imitate them for the *Morning Post*. Lamb later came to know Hall's satires, for he quotes from them in his review of Barron Field's poems in 1820.

Milton's prose works were edited by Thomas Birch, and by John Toland in folio.

'My bad Latin.' In the letter of 9th October 1802. Ainsworth was Robert Ainsworth, compiler of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, 1736, for many years the best Latin dictionary.

'Your Epigram.' Coleridge's epigram *On the Curious Circumstance that in the German Language the Sun is feminine and the Moon masculine*. It appeared in the *Morning Post* on 11th October 1802. Coleridge had been sending epigrams and other verse to the *Post* for some time. Harrington was Sir John Harrington (1561–1612), the author of many epigrams.

Stoddart and Allen we have met.

'Mrs. Green.' In 1837 or thereabouts there were two Misses Green at Christ's Hospital, one of whom was matron, 'who could no more have believed in a plurality of matrons, than I in a multiplication of Prime Ministers or Masters of Trinity. . . . It was a pleasure in after years to lead on the dear old lady to tell of the past, which was her present, of Coleridge, Legrice, Lamb, and their contemporaries, and by dint of attentive listening and happy ques-



tioning, to win the praise, as I did, of "most amusing conversation." None the less did I, as a new boy, fear her as if she had been one of the weird sisters.'—From 'Recollections of a New Boy' in *Cleanings from The Blue*, 1881.

Mrs. Anderson's notes: 'The Wordsworths were in London till 22nd September, having arrived there from Calais on 30th August. Billy Winch was a Christ's Hospital boy. He was in the 1st Regt. of Native Infantry, promoted captain in 1805, and died 3rd August 1806.'

## 108. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 23rd, 1802.

Your kind offer I will not a second time refuse. You shall send me a packet and I will do them into English with great care. Is not there one about W<sup>m</sup>. Tell, and would not that in the present state of discussions be likely to tell? The Epigrams I meant are to be found at the end of Harrington's Translation of Orlando Furioso; if you could get the book, they would some of them answer your purpose to modernize. If you can't, I fancy I can. Baxter's Holy Commonwealth I have luckily met with, and when I have sent it, you shall if you please consider yourself indebted to me 3s. 6d. the cost of it: especially as I purchased it after your solemn injunctions. The plain case with regard to my presents (which you seem so to shrink from) is that I have not at all affected the character of a DONOR, or thought of violating your sacred Law of Give and Take: but I have been *taking* and partaking the good things of your House (when I know you were not overabounding) and I now *give* unto you of mine; and by the grace of God I happen to be myself a little superabundant at present. I expect I shall be able to send you my final parcel in about a week: by that time I shall have gone thro' all Milton's Latin Works. There will come with it the Holy Commonwealth, and the identical North American Bible which you helped to dogs-eat at Xt's.—I call'd at Howell's for your little Milton, and also to fetch away the White Cross Street Library Books, which I have not forgot: but your books were not in a state to be got at then, and Mrs. H. is to let me know when she packs up. They will be sent by sea; and my little præcursor will come to you by the Whitehaven waggon accompanied with pens, penknife, &c.—Mrs. Howell was as usual very civil; and asked with great earnestness, if it were likely you would come to Town in the winter. She has a friendly eye upon you.

I read daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with 'Once a Jacobin': though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible

*ad populum.* A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor Sam Le Grice's death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid and he had been very foolish; but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. I have had no account a long time of Favell. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs, whether they had been wise or silly in their lifetime.

I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos's Books please. 'Goody Two Shoes' is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a Horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a Horse, and such like; instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history?

Damn them!—I mean the cursed Barbauld Crew, those Blights and Blasts of all that is Human in man and child.

As to the Translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the Nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get *sol.* a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

Have you anticipated it, or could not you give a Parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as to the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* states? Cromwell's interference for the Albigenses, B[uonaparte]'s against the Swiss. Then Religion would come in; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, the more hasty because I want my Supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it?—it has most the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, of any, and in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables,

and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's damn'd blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for an example. The council breaks up—

Being abroad, the earth was overlaid  
With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees  
Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees  
*Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new*  
From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,  
*And never would cease sending forth her clusters to the spring,*  
They still crowd out so: this flock here, that there, belabouring  
The loaded flowers. So, &c. &c.

[*Iliad*, book ii, 70-7.]

What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!

Take another: Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, poured his heroic wreak  
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm blood did break  
Thro' his cleft veins; but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude,  
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.  
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,  
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame  
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are  
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair  
The woman in her travail strives to take the worst it gives;  
With thought, it must be, 'tis love's fruit, the end for which she lives;  
The mean to make herself new born, what comforts will redound:  
So, &c.

[*Iliad*, book xi, 228-39.]

I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

Yours ever affectionately, and Pi-Pos's.

C. L.

['North American Bible.' The Indian translation of the Bible by the Rev. John Elliot. The actual copy at Christ's Hospital was sold at Sotheby's not long ago.

Coleridge was just now contributing political essays as well as verse to the *Morning Post*. 'Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin' appeared on 21st October 1802. These were afterwards reprinted in *Essays on his Own Times*. *Ad Populum* is a reminder of Coleridge's first political essays, the *Conciones ad Populum* of 1795.

For Samuel Le Grice, see Letters 9 and 44. Favell was Samuel Favell, also an old 'Blue.'

'Goody Two Shoes.' One of Newbery's most famous books for children, sometimes attributed to Goldsmith, though, I think, wrongly.

Mrs. Barbauld (1743-1825) was the author of *Hymns in Prose for Children*, and she contributed to her brother John Aikin's *Evenings at Home*, both very popular books. Lamb, who afterwards came to know Mrs. Barbauld, described

her and Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Godwin, who as a publisher called herself Baldwin, as the three bald women. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) was the author of many books for children; she lives by the *Story of the Robins*.

This attack on the conventional book for children at that time is illuminating, when we remember that within three or four years Lamb and his sister (who had been to the shop for specimens of the old style) were to write no fewer than six juvenile works in prose and verse, one of which, at any rate, the *Tales from Shakespeare*, has become a classic.

The translation for Stuart was either not made or not accepted; nor did Coleridge carry out the project of the parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell. Hallam, however, did so in his *Constitutional History of England*, unfavourably to Cromwell.

George Chapman's *Odyssey* was paraphrased by Lamb in his *Adventures of Ulysses*, 1808. Lamb either did not return to the subject with Coleridge, or his 'next letter' has been lost.]

109. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov 4th, 1802.

Observe, there comes to you, by the Kendal waggon to-morrow, the illustrious 5th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend; Baxter's 'Holy Commonwealth,' for which you stand indebted to me 3s. 6d.; an odd volume of Montaigne, being no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired at in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle (my usual supper), or peradventure a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton which, as it contains Salmasius—and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the question (why should I distract myself?)—I shall return to you when I pick up the *Latina opera*. The first Defence is the greatest work among them, because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes slightly tied together, has one passage which if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it; it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but engrained and innate); but the concluding

page, *i.e.* of *this passage* (not of the *Defensio*) which you will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational, so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—*Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci*—(*we blind folks*, I understand it, not *nos* for *ego*)—*sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor: nec tam oculorum bebetudine quam cælestium alarum umbrâ has nobis fecisse tenebras videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces veterum amicorum liceat.*

Vade gubernaculum mei pedis.

Da manum ministro amico.

Da collo manum tuam, ductor autem viæ ero tibi ego.

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it;—and I don't know why I put down so many words about it, but for the pleasure of writing to you and the want of another topic.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.'s letter to Mr. Fox.

[Lamb refers to Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano contra Alexandrum Morum Ecclesiasten*. The following is a translation of the Latin passage by Robert Fellowes:

And indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favour of the Deity; who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. Woe to him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this obscurity; and which, when occasioned, he is wont to illuminate with an interior light, more precious and more pure. To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances; among whom there are some with whom I may interchange the Pyladean and Thesean dialogue of inseparable friends.

Proceed and be the rudder of my feet.

Lend your hand to your devoted friend.

Throw your arm round my neck, and I will conduct you on the way.

Milton used separate passages, one from Euripides' *Orestes* and the second from *Heracles Mad*.

Coleridge's first letter to Charles James Fox was printed in the *Morning Post* for 4th November 1802, his second on 9th November.]

## 110. TO THOMAS MANNING

[November 1802.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute hand (I lie; *that* does not *sit*), and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell,—while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest postmaster at Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate—in particular your just remarks upon Industry, damned Industry (though indeed you left me to explore the reason), were highly relishing.

I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers, and roused themselves at their leisure,—the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world! Now, as Joseph Cottle, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

How steep! how painful the ascent!  
It needs the evidence of close deduction  
To know that ever I shall gain the top.

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very popular poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoica are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and way-lay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims—

*Twelve, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!*

Cottle read two or three acts to us, very gravely on both sides, till he came to this heroic touch,—and then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases.

A propose: if you should go to Florence or to Rome, inquire what works are extant in gold, silver, bronze, or marble, of Benvenuto Cellini,

a Florentine artist, whose Life doubtless, you have read; or, if not, without controversy you must read: so hark ye, send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library. It is always put among the romances, very properly; but you have read it, I suppose. In particular, inquire at Florence for his colossal bronze statue (in the grand square or somewhere) of Perseus. You may read the story in Tooke's 'Pantheon.'

Nothing material has *transpired* in these parts. Coleridge has indited a violent philippic against Mr. Fox in the 'Morning Post,' which is a compound of expressions of humility, gentlemen-ushering-in most arrogant charges. It will do Mr. Fox no real injury among those that know him.

[Nine lines erased.]

[Manning's letter of 10th September had told Lamb he was on his way to Toulouse.

'Gap-toothed.' Chaucer has 'gat-toothed.'

'Cellini's Life.' Lamb would probably have read the translation by Nugent, 1771. Cellini's Perseus in bronze is in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence.

The famous letter that follows should have an introduction here. Briefly, Manning had just written, from Paris, the following startling news:

I am actually thinking of Independent Tartary as I write this, but you go out and skate—you go out and walk some times? Very true, that's a *dis-traction*—but the moment I set myself down quietly to any-thing, in comes Independent Tartary—for example I attend chemical lectures but every drug that Mr. Vauquelin presents to me tastes of Cream of Tartar—in short I am become good for nothing for a time, and as I said before, I should not have written now, but to assure you of my friendly and affectionate remembrance, but as you are not in the same unhappy circumstances, I expect you'll write to me and not measure page for page. This is the first letter I have begun for England for three months except one I sent to my Father yesterday.

Manning returned to London before leaving for China. He did not sail until 1806.]

### III. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 19th February 1803.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of 'Independent Tartary.' What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Mandevil's travels to cure you, or

come over to England. There is a Tartarman now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans—pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip*. Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin*. Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft now, has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did* like it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, 'Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?' But for a man boldly to face me out with, 'Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest,' is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honorable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases



himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman*. Rickman is a man 'absolute in all numbers.' I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you 'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them] pray contrive to *stink* as soon as you can that you may [? not] hang a [? on] hand at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere fr<sup>d</sup>,

C. LAMB.

[Prester John, the name given by old writers to the King of Ethiopia in Abyssinia. A corruption of Belul Gian, precious stone; in Latin first *Johanus preciosus*, then *Presbyter Johannes*, and then *Prester John*. In Sir John Mandeville's *Voyage and Travails*, 1356, *Prester John* is said to be a linear descendant of Ogier the Dane. Hartley would be David Hartley, the metaphysician, after whom Coleridge's son was named. The reader must go to Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* for Cambuscan, King of Sarra, in Tartary; his horse of brass which conveyed him in a day wherever he would go; and the ring which enabled his daughter Canacee to understand the language of birds.

Holcroft's play was *A Tale of Mystery*.

The merry natural captain was James Burney (1750-1821), with whom the Lambs soon became very friendly. Later he was promoted to admiral. He was the centre of their whist-playing circle. Burney, who was brother of Madame d'Arblay, had sailed with Captain Cook.

'The reverse of fishes in Holland.' An allusion to Andrew Marvell's whimsical satire against the Dutch:

The fish ofttimes the burgher dispossessed,  
And sat, not as a meat, but as a guest.

'Why not your father?' Manning's father was the Rev. William Manning, rector of Diss, in Norfolk, who died in 1810.]

## 112. TO THOMAS MANNING

March, 1803.

DEAR MANNING,

I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé

de Lisle, you may get 'em translated: he has done as much for the Georgics.

HESTER [*poem enclosed*]

What think you of destroying Xianuty by some such familiar couplets as these; easy to be remember'd from their briefness and affecting from this particularity. Videlicet—

Among those whom by the Prophet's command the bears ate up  
Was pretty little Master Jacky Gupp.

Such things come home to a parent's bosom.

Yours &c.

C. LAMB.

[The young Quaker was Hester Savory, the daughter of Joseph Savory, a goldsmith of the Strand. She was married 1st July 1802, and died a few months after.]

'The Abbé de Lisle.' L'Abbé Jacques Delille (1738-1813), known by his *Georgiques*, 1770, a translation into French of Virgil's *Georgics*.

Rickman told Southey that on 29th March Lamb called on him in town to say that his sister had been taken ill again.]

### 113. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1803.]

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health too has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off cayenned eggs and such bolsters to discomfort. There was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire. For you said they had that property. How the old Gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clapp't his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of God that burnt him, how pious it would have made him; him, I mean, that brought the Influenza with him, and only took places for one—a damn'd old sinner, he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy sideboard again. [*Here is a paragraph erased.*]

What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it. [*Another small erasure.*]

Morning is a Girl, and can't smoke—she's no evidence one way or other; and Night is so evidently *bought over*, that *he* can't be a very upright Judge. May be the truth is, that *one* pipe is wholesome, *two* pipes toothsome, *three* pipes noisome, *four* pipes fulsome, *five* pipes quarrelsome; and that's the *sum* on 't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good, mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless they take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

Bless you, old Sophist, who next to Human Nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing—and bless your Montero Cap, and your trail (which shall come after you whenever you appoint), and your wife and children—Pi-pos especially.

When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening; but a pipe and some generous Port, and King Lear (being alone), had its effects as a remonstrance. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear?

Love to Sara, and ask her what gown she means that Mary has got of hers. I know of none but what went with Miss Wordsworth's things to Wordsworth, and was paid for out of their money. I allude to a part which I may have read imperfectly in a letter of hers to you.

C. L.

[Coleridge had been in London early in April and had stayed with Lamb at 16 Mitre Court Buildings. From the following letter to his wife, dated 4th April, we get light on Lamb's allusion to his 'old housekeeper,' i.e. Mary Lamb, and her rapid mending:

I had purposed not to speak of Mary Lamb, but I had better write it than tell it. The Thursday before last she met at Rickman's a Mr. Babb, an old friend and admirer of her mother. The next day she *smiled* in an ominous way; on Sunday she told her brother that she was getting bad, with great agony. On Tuesday morning [29th March] she laid hold of me with violent agitation and talked wildly about George Dyer. I told Charles there was not a moment to lose; and I did not lose a moment, but went for a hackney-coach and took her to the private mad-house at Hughsden. She was quite calm, and said it was the best to do so. But she wept bitterly two or three times, yet all in a calm way. Charles is cut to the heart.

Lamb's first articulate doubts as to smoking are expressed in this letter. One may perhaps take in this connection the passage on tobacco and alcohol in the *Confessions of a Drunkard*.

'Montero cap.' A recollection of *Tristram Shandy*.

The Ogles and King Lear (i.e. leer)—merely a pun.]

## 114. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 20th May 1803.]

Mary sends love from home.

DR. C.,

I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to be [have] done; but you know how the human freewill is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste: too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to them. So I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication, (which must march first) and which I have transplanted from before the Preface (which stood like a dead wall of prose between) to be the first poem—then comes 'The Pixies,' and the things most juvenile—then on 'To Chatterton,' &c.—on, lastly, to the 'Ode on the Departing Year,' and 'Musings,'—which finish. Longman wanted the Ode first; but the arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the dedication, following the order of time. I told L. I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced several sonnets, &c.—but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of 'The Thimble,' and that of 'Flicker and Flicker's wife,' and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatised—and the 'Man of Ross,'—I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir 'Kisses.' It stands in your first volume as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing The Kiss to that of 'One Kiss, dear Maid,' &c., I have ventured to entitle it 'To Sara.' I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called 'Kisses' would have been absolutely ludicrous, and 'Effusion' is no name; and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you. But it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself in some sort accessory to the selection which I am to proof-correct. But I decidedly

said to Biggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off I can swear to *individually*, (except the 'Man of Ross,' which is too familiar in Pope,) but no others—you have your cue. For my part, I had rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept—*memoriæ causâ*.

Rob Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father;—see, how different from Charles he views the old man! *Literatim* 'My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigour of a young man Italian. He is really a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of discording life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him.' By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite. 'Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman road. It would distract him to mention anything that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, AND NOW RESTS AS THE FORMAL PRECISIAN OF NON-EXISTENCE.' Here is genius I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write—

I am in post-haste,

C. LAMB.

Love, &c., to Sara, P., and H.

#### 115. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Saturday, 27th May, 1803.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain, lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green islands of the Blest—voyages in time of war are very precarious—or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your witch (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit), and with it Condillac and

all other books of yours which were left here. These set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal waggon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry.

I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to him, enforcing a speedy mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature, to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and then circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn-hill, up Snow do., on to Wood-street, &c.? The former mode seems a sad superstitious subdivision of labour. Well! the 'Man of Ross' is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a Salutation poem, and has the mark of the beast 'Tobacco' upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again (as in first edition), like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the 'Man of Ross' is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it; and it now stands simply as 'Reflections at an Inn about a known Character,' and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact, 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass,  
for

Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass.

'Cheer'd' is a sad general word; 'wine-cheer'd' I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking-trumpet to sound to you 300 miles. But I am your factotum, and that (save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you) shall be next to a *fac-nihil*—at most, a *fac-simile*. I have ordered 'Initation of Spenser' to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be 'Flicker and Flicker's Wife,' 'The Thimble,' 'Breathe, dear harmonist,' and, I believe, 'The Child that was fed with Manna.' Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put 'Christabel' therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended

with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of *Tales*, *Choice Tales*, '*Ancient Mariners*,' &c.

C. LAMB.

Word of your health will be richly acceptable.

[Coleridge, who was getting more and more nervous about his health, had long been on the point of starting on some southern travels with Thomas Wedgwood, but Wedgwood had gone alone; his friend James Webbe Tobin, mentioned later in the letter, lived at Nevis, in the West Indies: possibly Coleridge had thoughts of returning with him. The Malta experiment, of which we are to hear later, had not, I think, yet been mooted.

'Lady Holland's mob.' This was the name given to a gang of roughs who assembled every year at Smithfield on the night before Bartholomew Fair opened, and engaged in lawlessness. See Hone's *Every-Day Book I* for 3rd September.

The reference to *Christabel* helps to controvert Fanny Godwin's remark in a letter to Mrs. Shelley, on 20th July 1816, that Lamb 'says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; that no one understood it.']

#### 116. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: ? June 1803.]

By some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverent regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

Your partiality to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray, be careful that it spread no further. 'Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray, rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.

Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report that it is Endymion. Dr. Stoddart talks of going out King's Advocate to Malta. He has studied the Civil and Canon Law just three canon months, to my knowledge. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known

many youths bred up at Christ's, who never learned to dance, yet the world imputes to them no very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St. Paul's, to teach us our quavers: but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ's.

Farewell, in haste.

C. L.

[Stoddart had taken his D.C.L. in 1801.

'Your theory . . .' This may have been contained in one of Coleridge's letters, now lost; I do not find it in any of the known *Morning Post* articles.

'Little Hudson.' Robert Hudson, Mus.B., who composed the music for James Boyer's Easter anthems for the Christ's Hospitalers to sing.]

#### 117. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 8, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been sitting down for three or four days successively to the review, which I so much wished to do well, and to your satisfaction. But I can produce nothing but absolute flatness and nonsense. My health and spirits are so bad, and my nerves so irritable, that I am sure, if I persist, I shall tease myself into a fever. You do not know how sore and weak a brain I have, or you would allow for many things in me which you set down for whims. I solemnly assure you that I never more wished to prove to you the value which I have for you than at this moment; but although in so seemingly trifling a service I cannot get through with it, I pray you to impute it to this one sole cause, ill health. I hope I am above subterfuge, and that you will do me this justice to think so.

You will give me great satisfaction by sealing my pardon and oblivion in a line or two, before I come to see you, or I shall be ashamed to come. —Your, with great truth,

C. LAMB.

[Lamb seems to have been endeavouring to review Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*. See next letter.]

#### 118. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 10, 1803.

DEAR GODWIN,

You never made a more unlucky and perverse mistake than to suppose that the reason of my not writing that cursed thing was to be found



in your book. I assure you most sincerely that I have been greatly delighted with Chaucer. I may be wrong, but I think there is one considerable error runs through it, which is a conjecturing spirit, a fondness for filling out the picture by supposing what Chaucer did and how he felt, where the materials are scanty. So far from meaning to withhold from you (out of mistaken tenderness) this opinion of mine, I plainly told Mrs. Godwin that I did find a *fault*, which I should reserve naming until I should see you and talk it over. This she may very well remember, and also that I declined naming this fault until she drew it from me by asking me if there was not too much fancy in the work. I then confessed generally what I felt, but refused to go into particulars until I had seen you. I am never very fond of saying things before third persons, because in the relation (such is human nature) something is sure to be dropped. If Mrs. Godwin has been the cause of your misconstruction, I am very angry, tell her; yet it is not an anger unto death. I remember also telling Mrs. G. (which she may have *dropt*) that I was by turns considerably more delighted than I expected. But I wished to reserve all this until I saw you. I even had conceived an expression to meet you with, which was thanking you for some of the most exquisite pieces of criticism I had ever read in my life. In particular, I should have brought forward that on 'Troilus and Cressida' and Shakespear which, it is little to say, delighted me, and instructed me (if not absolutely *instructed* me, yet put into *full-grown sense* many conceptions which had arisen in me before in my most discriminating moods). All these things I was preparing to say, and bottling them up till I came, thinking to please my friend and host, the author! when lo! this deadly blight intervened.

I certainly ought to make great allowances for your misunderstanding me. You, by long habits of composition and a greater command gained over your own powers, cannot conceive of the desultory and uncertain way in which I (an author by fits) sometimes cannot put the thoughts of a common letter into sane prose. Any work which I take upon myself as an engagement will act upon me to torment, e.g., when I have undertaken, as three or four times I have, a school-boy copy of verses for Merchant Taylors' boys, at a guinea a copy, I have fretted over them, in perfect inability to do them, and have made my sister wretched with my wretchedness for a week together. The same, till by habit I have acquired a mechanical command, I have felt in making paragraphs. As to reviewing, in particular, my head is so whimsical a head, that I cannot, after reading another man's book, let it have been never so pleasing, give any account of it in any methodical way. I cannot follow his train. Something like this you must have perceived of

me in conversation. Ten thousand times I have confessed to you, talking of my talents, my utter inability to remember in any comprehensive way what I read. I can vehemently applaud, or perversely stickle, at *parts*; but I cannot grasp at a whole. This infirmity (which is nothing to brag of) may be seen in my two little compositions, the tale and my play, in both which no reader, however partial, can find any story. I wrote such stuff about Chaucer, and got into such digressions, quite irreducible into  $1\frac{1}{2}$  column of a paper, that I was perfectly ashamed to show it you. However, it is become a serious matter that I should convince you I neither slunk from the task through a wilful deserting neglect, or through any (most imaginary on your part) distaste of Chaucer; and I will try my hand again, I hope with better luck. My health is bad and my time taken up, but all I can spare between this and Sunday shall be employed for you, since you desire it: and if I bring you a crude, wretched paper on Sunday, you must burn it, and forgive me; if it proves anything better than I predict, may it be a peace-offering of sweet incense between us.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb's review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, issued in October 1803, was never completed.]

Lamb's early Merchant Taylors' verses have been lost, but two epigrams that he wrote many years later for the son of J. A. Hessey, the publisher of the *London Magazine*, have been preserved (see the letter to Southey, 10th May 1830).]

#### 119. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: 1803.]

MY DEAR SIR,

I assure you positively that what I had begun to write about Chaucer was so inconsiderable that you could make no possible use of it. I have it not, and if I could recover it should be extremely hurt to be obliged to show it you. I beg you to let the matter now rest, and unless you wish to tease and vex me, that you will not mention it again. I hoped that I had said enough before.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Here perhaps may be placed an undated scrap to Godwin, in which Lamb says he has been 'strangely hindered' in a work in hand. 'I set to it in earnest yesterday morning, and rap-rap came a knock and one of the Lloyds (whom you know I love) from Birmingham, and no more business could be done that day.']

## 120. TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: 14th February 1804.]

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry we have not been able to hear of lodgings to suit young F. but we will not desist in the enquiry. In a day or two something may turn up. Boarding houses are common enough, but to find a family where he would be safe from impositions within & impositions without is not so easy.—

I take this opportunity of thanking you for your kind attentions to the Lad I took the liberty of recommending. *His* mother was disposed to have taken in young F. but could not possibly make room.

Your obliged &amp;c

C. LAMB.

Temple, 14 Feb., 1804.

[I do not know to what lads the note refers, but probably young F. was young Fricker, the brother of Mrs. Coleridge and Mrs. Southey. The note is interesting only as giving another instance of Lamb's willing helpfulness to others. For Poole, see *ante*, page 86.]

## 121. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 10th March 1804.]

DR. C.,

I blundered open this letter, its weight making me conjecture it held an inclosure; but finding it poetry (which is no man's ground, but waste and common) I perused it. Do you remember that you are to come to us to-night?

C. L.

To Mr. Coleridge,

Mr. Tobin's,

Barnards Inn, Holborn.

[This is written on the back of a paper addressed (to save postage) to Mr. Lamb, India House, containing a long extract from *Madox* in Southey's hand.

Coleridge, having been invited by Stoddart to Malta, was now in London on his way thither. Tobin was probably James Webbe Tobin, brother of John Tobin, the solicitor and dramatist.]

## 122. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 4th April 1804.]

Mary would send her best love, but I write at office.

Thursday [5th April].

The £1 came safe.

MY DEAR C.,

I but just received your commission-abounding letter. All shall be done. Make your European heart easy in Malta, all shall be performed. You say I am to transcribe off part of your letters and send to X somebody (but the name is lost under the wafer, so you must give it me)—I suppose Wordsw<sup>th</sup>.

I have been out of town since Saturday, the reason I had not your letter before. N.B. N.B. Knowing I had 2 or 3 Easter holydays, it was my intention to have ask'd you if my accompanying you to Ports<sup>m</sup>th would have been pleasant. But you were not visible, except just at the critical moment of going off from the Inn, at which time I could not get at you. So Deus aliter disposuit, and I went down into Hertfordshire.

I write in great bustle indeed—God bless you again. Attend to what I have written mark'd X above, and don't merge any part of your Orders under seal again.

C. LAMB.

[Addressed to 'S. T. Coleridge, Esq<sup>r</sup>., J. C. Mottley's, Esq<sup>r</sup>., Portsmouth, Hants.'

Coleridge had left London for Portsmouth on 27th March; he sailed for Malta on 9th April.]

## 123. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 2nd June 1804.]

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

The task of letter-writing in my family falls to me; you are the organ of correspondence in yours, so I address you rather than your brother. We are all sensibly obliged to you for the little scraps (Arthur's Bower and his brethren) which you sent up; the bookseller has got them and paid Mrs. Fenwick for them. So while some are authors for fame, some for money, you have commenced author for charity. The least we can do, is to see your commissions fulfilled; accordingly I have booked this 2<sup>d</sup> June 1804 from the Waggon Inn in Cripplegate the watch and books

which I got from your brother Richard, together with Purchas's Pilgrimage and Brown's Religio Medici which I desire your brother's acceptance of, with some pens, of which I observed no great frequency when I tarried at Grasmere. (I suppose you have got Coleridge's letter)—These things I have put up in a deal box directed to Mr. Wordsworth, Grasmere, near Ambleside, Kendal, by the Kendal waggon. At the same time I have sent off a parcel by C.'s desire to Mr. T. Hutchinson to the care of Mr. 'T. Monkhouse, or T. Markhouse' (for C.'s writing is not very plain) Penrith, by the Penrith waggon this day; which I beg you to apprise them of, lest my direction fail. In your box, you will find a little parcel for Mrs. Coleridge, which she wants as soon as possible; also for yourselves the Cotton, Magnesia, bark and Oil, which come to £2. 3. 4. thus.

	sh.
Thread and needles	17
Magnesia	8
bark	9 . 8
Oil	8 . 8
	<hr/>
	2 . 3 . 4
packing case	2 . 6
	<hr/>
	2 . 5 . 10
deduct a guinea I owe you,	}
which C. was to pay,	
but did not	
	<hr/>
leaves you indebted	1 . 4 . 10

whereby you may see how punctual I am.

I conclude with our kindest remembrances to your brother and Mrs. W.

We hear, the young John is a Giant.

And should you see Charles Lloyd, pray *forget* to give my love to him.

Yours truly, D<sup>r</sup> Miss W.

C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth's eldest child, John, was born on 18th June 1803.]

#### 124. TO ROBERT LLOYD

September 13, 1804.

DEAR ROBERT,

I was startled in a very pleasant manner by the contents of your letter. It was like your good self to take so handsome an opportunity of

renewing an old friendship. I thank you kindly for your offers to bring me acquainted with Mrs. Ll. I cannot come now, but assuredly I will some time or other, to see how this new relation sits upon you. I am naturally shy of new faces; but the Lady who has chosen my old friend Robert cannot have a repelling one. Assure her of my sincere congratulations and friendly feelings. Mary joins in both with me, and considers herself as only left out of your kind invitation by some LAP-SUS STYLI. We have already had all the holydays we can have this year. We have been spending our usual summer month at Richmond, from which place we traced the banks of the old Thames for ten and twenty miles, in daily walks or rides, and found beauties which may compare with Ulswater and Windermere. We visited Windsor, Hampton, etc. etc.—but this is a deviation from the subject with which I began my letter.

Some day I certainly shall come and see you in your new light; no longer the restless (but good) [? single] Robert; but now the staid, sober (and not less good) married Robert. And how does Plumstead, the impetuous, take your getting the start of him? When will he subside into matrimony? Priscilla has taken a long time indeed to think about it. I will suppose that her first choice is now her final; though you do not expressly say that she is to be a Wordsworth. I wish her, and dare promise her, all happiness.

All these new nuptials do not make me unquiet in the perpetual prospect of celibacy. There is a quiet dignity in old bachelorhood, a leisure from cares, noise, etc., an enthronisation upon the armed-chair of a man's feeling that he may sit, walk, read, unmolested, to none accountable—but hush! or I shall be torn in pieces like a churlish Orpheus by young married women and bridemaids of Birmingham. The close is this, to every man that way of life, which in his election is best. Be as happy in yours as I am determined to be in mine, and we shall strive lovingly who shall sing best the praises of matrimony, and the praises of singleness.

Adieu, my old friend in a new character, and believe me that no 'wounds' have pierced our friendship; only a long want of seeing each other has disfurnished us of topics on which to talk. Is not your new fortunes a topic which may hold us for some months (the honey months at least)?

C. LAMB.

[Robert Lloyd had married Hannah Hart (daughter of Francis Hart, banker, of Nottingham), on 2nd August 1804, in the Castle Dunnington meeting house, Leicester. She was a Quakeress, and she proved to be a model wife.]

125. *Joint letter:* CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH, AND MARY LAMB TO MRS. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1804.]

(Turn over leaf for more letters.)

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is, and why should I not confess it? I am not plethorically abounding in Cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is 'Contented with little, yet wishing for more.' Now the books you wish for would require some pounds, which I am sorry to say I have not by me; so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town-banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of [it] to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely, for it is a scurvy thing to cry Give me the money first, and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries: but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it!

The books which you want I calculate at about £8.

Ben Jonson is a Guinea Book. Beaumont & Fletcher in folio, the right folio, not now to be met with; the octavos are about £3. As to any other old dramatists, I do not know where to find them except what are in Dodsley's old plays, which are about £3 also: Massinger I never saw but at one shop, but it is now gone, but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve and the rest of King Charles's moralists are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will enquire after, but I fear, Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old Poets & Dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for I suppose you do not include the £20 edition of Hamlet, single play, which Kemble has. Marlow's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two, of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakespear. Let me know your will and pleasure soon: for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency without the penalty usually annex'd.

C. LAMB.

[*Mary Lamb to Dorothy Wordsworth*]

[P.M. 13th October 1804.]

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I writ a letter immediately upon the receipt of yours, to thank you for sending me the welcome tidings of your little niece's birth, and Mrs. Wordsworth's safety, & waited till I could get a frank to send it in. Not being able to procure one, I will defer my thanks no longer for fear Mrs. Wordsworth should add another little baby to your family, before my congratulations on the birth of the little Dorothy arrive.

I hope Mrs. Wordsworth, & the pretty baby, & the young philosopher, are well: they are three strangers to me whom I have a longing desire to be acquainted with.

My brother desires me not to send such a long gossiping letter as that I had intended for you, because he wishes to fill a large share of the paper with his acknowledgments to Mr. Wordsworth for his letters, which he considers as a very uncommon favor, your brother seldom writing letters. I must beg my brother will tell Mr. Wordsworth how very proud he has made me also by praising my poor verses. Will you be so kind as to forward the opposite page to Mrs. Coleridge. This sheet of paper is quite a partnership affair. When the parliament meets you shall have a letter for your sole use.

My brother and I have been this summer to Richmond; we had a lodging there for a month, we passed the whole time there in wandering about, & comparing the views from the banks of the Thames with your mountain scenery, & tried, & wished, to persuade ourselves that it was almost as beautiful. Charles was quite a Mr. Clarkson in his admiration and his frequent exclamations, for though we had often been at Richmond for a few hours we had no idea it was so beautiful a place as we found it on a month's intimate acquaintance.

We rejoice to hear of the good fortune of your brave sailor-brother, I should have liked to have been with you when the news first arrived.

Your very friendly invitations have made us long to be with you, and we promise ourselves to spend the first money my brother earns by writing certain books (Charles often plans but never begins) in a journey to Grasmere.

When your eyes (which I am sorry to find continue unwell) will permit you to make use of your pen again I shall be very happy to see a letter in your own hand writing.

I beg to be affectionately remembered to your brother & sister & remain  
ever your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

Compliments to old Molly.



[*Mary Lamb to Mrs. S. T. Coleridge*][P.M. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1804.]

MY DEAR MRS. COLERIDGE,

I have had a letter written ready to send to you, which I kept, hoping to get a frank, and now I find I must write one entirely anew, for that consisted of matter not now in season, such as condolence on the illness of your children, who I hope are now quite well, & comfortings on your uncertainty of the safety of Coleridge, with wise reasons for the delay of the letters from Malta, which must now be changed for pleasant congratulations. Coleridge has not written to us, but we have had two letters from the Stoddarts since the one I sent to you, containing good accounts of him, but as I find you have had letters from himself I need not tell you the particulars.

My brother sent your letters to Mr. Motley according to Coleridge's direction, & I have no doubt but he forwarded them.

One thing only in my poor letter the time makes no alteration in, which is that I have half a bed ready for you, & I shall rejoice with exceeding great joy to have you with me. Pray do not change your mind for I shall be sadly disappointed if you do. Will Hartley be with you? I hope he will, for you say he goes with you to Liverpool, and I conclude you come from thence to London.

I have seen your brother lately, and I find he entertains good hopes from Mr. Salte, and his present employment I hear is likely to continue a considerable time longer, so that I hope you may consider him as good as provided for. He seems very steady, and is very well spoken of at his office.

I have lately been often talking of you with Mrs. Hazlitt. William Hazlitt is painting my brother's picture, which has brought us acquainted with the whole family. I like William Hazlitt and his sister very much indeed, & I think Mrs. Hazlitt a pretty good-humoured woman. She has a nice little girl of the Pypoos kind, who is so fond of my brother that she stops strangers in the street to tell them when *Mr. Lamb is coming to see her*.

I hope Mr. Southey and your sister and the little Edith are well. I beg my love to them.

God bless you, and your three little darlings, & their wandering father, who I hope will soon return to you in high health & spirits.

I remain ever your affectionate friend

MARY LAMB.

Compliments to Mr. Jackson and darling friend. I hope they are well.

[*Charles Lamb adds:*]

C. Lamb particularly desires to be remembered to Southey and all the Southeys, as well as to Mrs. C., and her little Coleridges. Mrs. C.'s letters have all been sent as Coleridge left word, to Motley's, Portsmouth.

[The Ben Jonson in Lamb's own library was the 1692 folio; his Beaumont and Fletcher, which may be seen at the British Museum, was the folio of 1647 or 1679.

Spenser's prose work, *View of the Present State of Ireland*, is that referred to.

'John Ford.' Lamb says in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808: 'Ford was of the first order of poets.'

Dorothy Wordsworth (afterwards the wife of Edward Quillinan) was born 16th August 1804.

'Your brave sailor-brother.' John Wordsworth.

Mrs. Coleridge now had three children—Hartley, Derwent, and Sara. We do not know whether or no she stayed with the Lambs, as suggested. Her brother was George Fricker.

Mrs. Anderson discovered that there was a Wm. Salte, wholesale linen-draper, at 20 Poultry in the 1799 and 1808 directories.

William Hazlitt's sister was Peggy Hazlitt. His sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was the wife of John Hazlitt, the miniature painter. Some of Peggy's paintings and a portrait of her are in the Maidstone Museum.

Hazlitt's portrait of Lamb was the one in the dress of a Venetian senator, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. Another version of it, with Lamb holding *Rosamund Gray* in his hand, exists.]

## 126. CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

7 Nov., 1804.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward the news I now send to him, I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. D.'s sister-in-law, who lives in St. Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago, to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, and left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money—how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with all Love, &c., to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who by his wife's account, had got 1000*l.* left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and factotum.

In haste,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Richard Holburt Esq.'s will was proved 10th October 1804: £1,000 3 per cent stock to John Dyer, lighter man, Fleet Street, £250 to G. D., both paid before the dividend day occurring next after his decease.']

127. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 18th February 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

The subject of your letter has never been out of our thoughts since the day we first heard of it, and many have been our impulses towards you, to write to you, or to write to enquire about you; but it never seemed the time. We felt all your situation, and how much you would want Coleridge at such a time, and we wanted somehow to make up to you his absence, for we loved and honoured your Brother, and his death always occurs to my mind with something like a feeling of reproach, as if we ought to have been nearer acquainted, and as if there had been some incivility shown him by us, or something short of that respect which we now feel: but this is always a feeling when people die, and I should not foolishly offer a piece of refinement, instead of sympathy, if I knew any other way of making you feel how little like indifferent his loss has been to us. I have been for some time wretchedly ill and low, and your letter this morning has affected me so with a pain in my inside and a confusion, that I hardly know what to write or how. I have this morning seen Stewart, the 2<sup>d</sup> mate, who was saved: but he can give me no satisfactory account, having been in quite another part of the ship when your brother went down. But I shall see Gilpin to-morrow, and will communicate your thanks, and learn from him all I can. All accounts agree that just before the vessel going down, your brother seemed like one overwhelmed with the situation, and careless of his own safety. Perhaps he might have saved himself; but a Captain who in such circumstances does all he can for his ship and nothing for himself, is the noblest idea. I can hardly express myself, I am so really

ill. But the universal sentiment is, that your brother did all that duty required: and if he had been more alive to the feelings of those distant ones whom he loved, he would have been at that time a less admirable object; less to be exulted in by them: for his character is high with all that I have heard speak of him, and no reproach can fix upon him. Tomorrow I shall see Gilpin, I hope, if I can get at him, for there is expected a complete investigation of the causes of the loss of the ship, at the East India House, and all the Officers are to attend: but I could not put off writing to you a moment. It is most likely I shall have something to add tomorrow, in a second letter. If I do not write, you may suppose I have not seen G. but you shall hear from me in a day or two. We have done nothing but think of you, particularly of Dorothy. Mary is crying by me while I with difficulty write this: but as long as we remember any thing, we shall remember your Brother's noble person, and his sensible manly modest voice, and how safe and comfortable we all were together in our apartment, where I am now writing. When he returned, having been one of the triumphant China fleet, we thought of his pleasant exultation (which he exprest here one night) in the wish that he might meet a Frenchman in the seas; and it seem'd to be accomplished, all to his heart's desire. I will conclude from utter inability to write any more, for I am seriously unwell: and because I mean to gather something like intelligence to send to you tomorrow: for as yet, I have but heard second hand, and seen one narrative, which is but a transcript of what was common to all the Papers. God bless you all, and reckon upon us as entering into all your griefs.

[This is the first of a series of letters bearing upon the loss of the East India-man *Earl of Abergavenny*, which was wrecked off Portland Bill on 5th February 1805, 200 persons and the captain, John Wordsworth, being lost. The character of Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior* (1806) is said to have been largely drawn from his brother John, to whose memory he also wrote *Elegiac Verses* in 1805. His age was only thirty-three.]

## 128. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 19th February 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I yesterday wrote you a very unsatisfactory letter. To day I have not much to add, but it may be some satisfaction to you that I have seen Gilpin, and thanked him in all your names for the assistance he tried to give: and that he has assured me that your Brother did try to save him-

self, and was doing so when Gilpin called to him, but he was then struggling with the waves and almost dead. G. heard him give orders a very little before the vessel went down, with all possible calmness, and it does not at all appear that your Brother in any absence of mind neglected his own safety. But in such circumstances the memory of those who escaped cannot be supposed to be very accurate; and there appears to be about the Persons that I have seen a good deal of reservedness and unwillingness to enter into detail, which is natural, they being Officers of the Ship, and liable to be examined at home about its loss. The examination is expected to day or to-morrow, and if any thing should come out, that can interest you, I shall take an early opportunity of sending it to you.

Mary wrote some few days since to Miss Stoddart, containing an account of your Brother's death, which most likely Coleridge will have heard, before the letter comes: we both wish it may hasten him back. We do not know any thing of him, whether he is settled in any post (as there was some talk) or not. We had another sad account to send him, of the death of his schoolfellow Allen; tho' this, I am sure, will much less affect him. I don't know whether you knew Allen; he died lately very suddenly in an apoplexy. When you do and can write, particularly inform us of the healths of you all. God bless you all. Mary will write to Dorothy as soon as she thinks she will be able to bear it. It has been a sad tidings to us, and has affected us more than we could have believed. I think it has contributed to make me worse, who have been very unwell, and have got leave for some few days to stay at home: but I am ashamed to speak of myself, only in excuse for the unfeeling sort of huddle which I now send. I could not delay it, having seen Gilpin, and I thought his assurance might be some little ease to you.

We will talk about the Books, when you can better bear it. I have bought none yet. But do not spare me any office you can put me on, now or when you are at leisure for such things. Adopt me as one of your family in this affliction; and use me without ceremony as such.

Mary's kindest Love to all.

C. L.

Tuesday [19th February].

[Coleridge a little later accepted the post of private secretary to the Governor of Malta, Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball. Miss Stoddart was Sarah, the sister of John Stoddart, who in 1803 had been appointed the King's and the Admiralty's Advocate at Malta, whither she had followed him. Allen was Bob Allen, whom we have already met.]

## 129. TO THOMAS MANNING

16 Mitre-court Buildings,

Saturday, 24th [i.e. 23rd] Feb., 1805.

DEAR MANNING,

We have executed your commissions. There was nothing for you at the White Horse. I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College; and the generous creature has contrived with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that 'orders (to wit, for brawn), from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland will be duly executed,' &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumplets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, run-away gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dishwashers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modern poet,—'you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;' so brawn, you must taste it, ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept; those that will send out their tongues and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of

brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu: I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp the barber, of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chesnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair just to remember him by; gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens*, that is, your *Present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

[This letter is, I take it, a joke: that is to say, the brawn was sent to Lamb by Manning, who seems to have returned to Cambridge for a while, and Lamb affects to believe that Hopkins, from whom it was bought, was the giver. I think this view is supported by the reference to Mr. Crisp, at the end, Mr. Crisp being Manning's late landlord.]

The following advertisement occurs in the *Cambridge Chronicle* for 8th February 1806. It was sent me by Dr. Wherry of Cambridge:

#### CAMBRIDGE BRAWN

R. HOPKINS, Cook of Trinity Hall and Caius College, begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, &c. that he has now ready for sale, BRAWN, BRAWN HEADS & CHEEKS.

All orders will be thankfully received, and forwarded to any part of the kingdom.

Lamb stayed at 3 St. Mary's Passage, now rebuilt and occupied by Messrs. Leach & Son (1934).

The letter contains Lamb's second expression of epicurean rapture: the first in praise of pig.

'*Præsens ut absens*.' Lamb enlarged upon the topic of gifts and giving many years later, in the Popular Fallacy, 'That we must not look a Gift Horse in the Mouth,' 1826, and in his 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' 1833.]

## 130. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 5th March 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

If Gilpin's statement has afforded you any satisfaction, I can assure you that he was most explicit in giving it, and even seemed anxious (interrupting me) to do away any misconception. His statement is not contradicted by the last and fullest of the two Narratives which have been published (the former being a mere transcript of the newspapers), which I would send you if I did not suppose that you would receive more pain from the unfeeling canting way in which it is drawn up, than satisfaction from its contents; and what relates to your brother in particular is very short. It states that your brother was seen talking to the First Mate but a few minutes before the ship sank, with apparent cheerfulness, and it contradicts the newspaper account about his depression of spirits procrastinating his taking leave of the Court of Directors; which the drawer up of the Narrative (a man high in the India House) is likely to be well informed of. It confirms Gilpin's account of his seeing your brother striving to save himself, and adds that 'Webber, a Joiner, was near the Captain, who was standing on the hencoop when the ship went down, whom he saw washed off by a sea, which also carried him (Webber) overboard;'—this is all which concerns your brother personally. But I will just transcribe from it, a Copy of Gilpin's account delivered in to the Court of Directors:—

Memorandum respecting the Loss of the E. of A.

At 10 A.M. being about 10 leagues to the westward of Portland, the Commodore made the signal to bear up—did so accordingly; at this time having maintop gallant mast struck, fore and main d<sup>o</sup>. on deck, and the jib boom in the wind about W.S.W. At 3 P.M. got on board a Pilot, being about 2 leagues to the westward of Portland; ranged and bitted both cables at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3, called all hands and got out the jib boom at about 4. While crossing the east End of the Shambles, the wind suddenly died away, and a strong tide setting the ship to the westward, drifted her into the breakers, and a sea striking her on the larboard quarter, brought her to, with her head to the northward, when she instantly struck, it being about 5 P.M. Let out all the reefs, and hoisted the topsails up, in hopes to shoot the ship across the Shambles. About this time the wind shifted to the N.W. The surf driving us off, and the tide setting us on alternately, sometimes having  $4\frac{1}{2}$  at others 9 fathoms, sand of the sea about 8 feet; continued in this situation till about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7, when she got off. During the time she was on the Shambles, had from 3 to 4 feet water; kept the water at this height about 15 minutes, during the whole time the pumps constantly going. Finding she gained on us, it was determined to run her on the nearest shore. About 8 the wind shifted to the eastward: the leak continuing to gain upon the pumps, having 10 or 11 feet water, found it expedient to bale at the forecuttles and hatchway. The ship would not bear up—kept the helm hard a starboard, she being water-logg'd: but still had a hope she



could be kept up till we got her on Weymouth Sands. Cut the lashings of the boats—could not get the Long Boat out, without laying the main-top-sail aback, by which our progress would have been so delayed, that no hope would have been left us of running her aground, and there being several sloops in sight, one having sent a small skiff on board, took away 2 Ladies and 3 other passengers, and put them on board the sloop, at the same time promising to return and take away a hundred or more of the people: she finding much difficulty in getting back to the sloop, did not return. About this time the Third Mate and Purser were sent in the cutter to get assistance from the other ships. Continued pumping and baling till 11 P.M. when she sunk. Last cast of the lead 11 fathoms; having fired guns from the time she struck till she went down, about 2 A.M. boats came and took the people from the wreck about 70 in number. The troops, in particular the Dragoons, pumped very well.

(Signed) THO<sup>s</sup>. GILPIN.

And now, my dear W.—I must apologize for having named my health. But indeed it was because, what with the ill news, your letter coming upon me in a most wretched state of ill spirits, I was scarce able to give it an answer, and I felt what it required. But we will say no more about it. I am getting better. And when I have persisted time enough in a course of regular living I shall be well. But I am now well enough; and have got to business afresh. Mary thanks you for your invitation. I have wished myself with you daily since the news. I have wished that I were Coleridge, to give you any consolation. You have not mourned without one to have a feeling of it. And we have not undervalued the intimation of your friendship. We shall one day prove it by intruding on your privacy, when these griefs shall be a little calmed. This year, I am afraid, it is impossible: but I shall store it up as among the good things to come, which keep us up when life and spirits are sinking.

If you have not seen, or wish to see, the wretched narrative I have mentioned, I will send it. But there is nothing more in it affecting you. I have hesitated to send it, because it is unfeelingly true, and in the hope of sending you something from some of the actual spectators; but I have been disappointed, and can add nothing yet. Whatever I pick up, I will store for you. It is perfectly understood at the E. I. House, that no blame whatever belongs to the Capt<sup>n</sup>. or Officers.

I can add no more but Mary's warmest Love to all. When you can write without trouble, do it, for you are among the very chief of our interests.

C. LAMB.

4 March.

## 131. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

[Dated at end: *21st March 1805.*]

Upon the receipt of your last letter before that which I have just received, I wrote myself to Gilpin putting your questions to him; but have yet had no answer. I at the same time got a person in the India House to write a much fuller enquiry to a relative of his who was saved, one Yates a midshipman. Both these officers (and indeed pretty nearly all that are left) have got appointed to other ships and have joined them. Gilpin is in the *Comet*, India-man, now lying at Gravesend. Neither Yates nor Gilpin have yet answered, but I am in daily expectation. I have sent your letter of this morning also to Gilpin. The waiting for these answers has been my reason for not writing you. I have made very particular enquiries about Webber, but in vain. He was a common seaman (not the ship's carpenter) and no traces of him are at the I. House: it is most probable that he has entered in some Privateer, as most of the crew have done. I will keep the £1 note till you find out something I can do with it. I now write idly, having nothing to send: but I cannot bear that you should think I have quite neglected your commission. My letter to G. was such as I thought he could not but answer: but he may be busy. The letter to Yates I hope I can promise will be answered. One thing, namely why the other ships sent no assistance, I have learn'd from a person on board one of them: the firing was never once heard, owing to the very stormy night, and no tidings came to them till next morning. The sea was quite high enough to have thrown out the most expert swimmer, and might not your brother have received some blow in the shock, which disabled him? We are glad to hear poor Dorothy is a little better. None of you are able to bear such a stroke. To people oppressed with feeling, the loss of a good-humoured happy man that has been friendly with them, if he were no brother, is bad enough. But you must cultivate his spirits, as a legacy: and believe that such as he cannot be lost. He was a chearful soul! God bless you. Mary's love always.

C. LAMB.

21st March, 1805.

## 132. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

[P.M. *5th April 1805.*]

I have this moment received this letter from Gilpin in reply to 3 or 4 short questions I put to him in my letter before yours for him came.

He does not notice having rec<sup>d</sup> yours, which I sent immediately. Perhaps he has already answered it to you. You see that his hand is sprain'd, and your questions being more in number, may delay his answer to you. My first question was, when it was he called to your brother: the rest you will understand from the answers. I was beginning to have hard thoughts of G. from his delay, but now I am confirm'd in my first opinion that he is a rare good-hearted fellow. How is Dorothy? and all of you?

Yours sincerely

C. LAMB.

4th question was, was Capt. W. standing near the shrouds or any place of safety at the moment of sinking?

Comet,

Northfleet, *March 31st, 1805.*

SIR,

I did not receive yours of 16th inst<sup>t</sup> till this day, or sh<sup>d</sup> have answered it sooner. To your first Question, I answer after the Ship had sunk. To your second, my answer is, I was in the Starboard Mizen Rigging—I thought I see the Capt<sup>n</sup> hanging by a Rope that was fast to the Mizen Mast. I came down and haild him as loud as I could, he was about 10 feet distant from me. I threw a rope which fell close to him, he seem'd quite Motionless and insensible (it was excessive cold), and was soon after sweep'd away, and I see him no more. It was near about five minutes after the Ship went down. With respect to the Capt<sup>n</sup> and Webber being on the same Hencoop, I can give no answer, all I can say, I did not see them. Your fourth Question, I cannot answer, as I did not see Capt. Wordsworth at the moment the Ship was going down, tho I was then on the Poop less than one minute before I see the Capt<sup>n</sup> there. The Statement in the printed Pamphlet is by no means correct. I have sprained my Wrist, most violently, and am now in great pain, which will, I hope, be an apology for the shortness of this Letter.

believe me truly yours \*

THOS. GILPIN.

This Letter has been detained till April 5th.

\* This is merely a kind way of expressing himself, for I have no acquaintance with him, nor ever saw him but that once I got introduced to him.

I think I did not mention in my last, that I sent yours to T. Evans, Richmond. I hope you have got an answer.

[In a letter from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson, dated 19th April 1805, we read: 'I have great pleasure in thinking that you may see Miss Lamb; do not miss it, if you can possibly go without injury to yourself—they are the best good creatures—blessings be with them! they have sympathised in our sorrow as tenderly as if they had grown up in the same [? town] with us and known our beloved John from his childhood. Charles has written to us the most consolatory letters, the result of diligent and painful inquiry of the survivors of the wreck,—for this we must love him as long as we have breath.

I think of him and his sister every day of my life, and many times in the day with thankfulness and blessings. Talk to dear Miss Lamb about coming into this country and let us hear what she says of it. I cannot express how much we all wish to see her and her brother while we are at Grasmere. We look forward to Coleridge's return with fear and painful hope—but indeed I dare not look to it—I think as little as I can of him.']

## 133. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Slightly torn. The conjectures in square brackets are Talfourd's.]

Friday, 14th June, 1805.

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

Your long kind letter has not been thrown away (for it has given me great pleasure to find you are all resuming your old occupations, and are better) but poor Mary to whom it is address cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month, or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have in this case contributed to her indisposition. But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down, and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a [fool, ber]left of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I [should think] wrong; so used am I to look up to her [in the least] and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that* [I know of her] would be more than I think any body could [believe or even under]stand; and when I hope to have her well [again with me] it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better, than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this up-braiding of myself I am offending against her, for I

know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade.

I am stupid and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

Poor Miss Stoddart! she is coming to England under the notion of passing her time between her mother and Mary, between London and Salisbury. Since she talk'd of coming, word has been sent to Malta that her Mother is gone out of her mind. This Letter, with mine to Stoddart with an account of Allen's death, &c., has miscarried (taken by the French) [*word missing*]. She is coming home, with no soul to receive [*words missing*]. She has not a woman-friend in London.

I am sure you will excuse my writing [and more, I] am very poorly. I cannot resist tra[n]scribing three or four Lines which poor Mary made upon a Picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an Auction only one week before she left home. She was then beginning to show signs of ill boding. They are sweet Lines, and upon a sweet Picture. But I send them, only as the last memorial of her.

VIRGIN AND CHILD. L. DA VINCI

Maternal Lady with the Virgin-grace,  
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,  
And thou a virgin pure.  
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face  
Men look upon, they wish to be  
A Catholic, Madona fair, to worship thee.

You had her lines about the 'Lady Blanch.' You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung, in our room. 'Tis light and pretty.

Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place  
Of Blanch, the Lady of the matchless grace?  
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me  
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?  
Thou pretty art and fair,  
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare  
No need for Blanch her history to tell,  
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well.  
But when I look on thee, I only know  
There liv'd a pretty maid some hundred years ago.

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance.

That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary's recovery.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand, which my wise conduct has already incroach'd upon one half. My best Love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her.

C. LAMB.

[Mary Lamb's two poems were included in the *Works*, 1818.]

#### 134. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated by W. C. Hazlitt: 27th July 1805.]

DEAR ARCHIMEDES,

Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has shown signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I shan't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the west, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. But the L—d opened Sara's bag after years of unproduction. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular; shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of pease with bacon and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

Nurse, don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes.—What, the gentleman in spectacles? Yes.

*Dormit.*

C. L.

Saturday,  
Hot Noon.

['Have been taking leave of tobacco.' On 10th August 1824 we shall find Lamb telling Hood that he designs to give up smoking.]

## 135. TO WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 28th September 1805.]

My dear Wordsworth (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right.)—I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, or, I believe the true state of the case, so diffident, that it must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them, and that and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy) often deter her where no other reason does. We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am: so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us not unaptly Gum Boil and Tooth Ache: for they use to say that a Gum Boil is a great relief to a Tooth Ache. We have been two tiny excursions this summer, for three or four days each: to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our Rustications this year. Alas! how poor a sound to Skiddaw, and Helvellyn, and Borradaile, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802. Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that 'last infirmity of Noble Mind,' and her Cow—Providence need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her. And in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner. I hope by southwards you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favorite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as is possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too?—our kindest separate remembrances to him.

As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job, and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce—but hitherto all schemes have gone off,—an idle brag or two of an evening vamping out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my 'Sweet Enemy' Tobacco, as you will see in my next page, I perhaps shall set soberly to work. Hang Work! I wish that all the year were holyday. I am sure that Indolence indefeasible Indolence is the true state of man, and business the invention of the Old Teazer who persuaded Adam's Master to give him an apron and set him a houghing. Pen and Ink,

and Clerks, and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer a thousand years after, under pretence of Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good, &c.—

#### A FAREWELL TO TOBACCO

May the Babylonish curse  
 Strait confound my stammering verse,  
 If I can a passage see  
 In this word-perplexity,  
 Or a fit expression find,  
 Or a language to my mind,  
 (Still the phrase is wide an acre)  
 To take leave of thee, Tobacco;  
 Or in any terms relate  
 Half my Love, or half my Hate,  
 For I hate yet love thee so,  
 That, whichever Thing I shew,  
 The plain truth will seem to be  
 A constrain'd hyperbole,  
 And the passion to proceed  
 More from a Mistress than a Weed.

Sooty retainer to the vine,  
 Bacchus' black servant, negro fine,  
 Sorcerer that mak'st us doat upon  
 Thy begum'd complexion,  
 And, for thy pernicious sake  
 More and greater oaths to break  
 Than reclaimed Lovers take  
 'Gainst women: Thou thy siege dost lay  
 Much too in the female way,  
 While thou suck'st the labouring breath  
 Faster than kisses; or than Death.  
 Thou in such a cloud dost bind us,  
 That our worst foes cannot find us,  
 And Ill Fortune (that would thwart us)  
 Shoots at rovers, shooting at us;  
 While each man thro' thy heightening steam,  
 Does like a smoking Etna seem,  
 And all about us does express  
 (Fancy and Wit in richest dress)  
 A Sicilian Fruitfulness.

Thou through such a mist dost shew us,  
 That our best friends do not know us;  
 And, for those allowed features,  
 Due to reasonable creatures,  
 Liken'st us to fell Chimeras,  
 Monsters, that, who see us, fear us,  
 Worse than Cerberus, or Geryon,  
 Or, who first loved a cloud, Ixion.



Bacchus we know, and we allow  
 His tipsy rites. But what art thou?  
 That but by reflex canst shew  
 What his deity can do,  
 As the false Egyptian spell  
 Aped the true Hebrew miracle—  
 Some few vapours thou may'st raise,  
 The weak brain may serve to amaze,  
 But to the reins and nobler heart  
 Canst nor life nor heat impart.

Brother of Bacchus, later born,  
 The old world was sure forlorn,  
 Wanting thee; that aidest more  
 The God's victories than before  
 All his panthers, and the brawls  
 Of his piping Bacchanals;  
 These, as stale, we disallow,  
 Or judge of *thee* meant: only thou  
 His true Indian Conquest art;  
 And, for Ivy round his dart,  
 The reformed God now weaves  
 A finer Thyrsus of thy leaves.

Scent to match thy rich perfume  
 Chymic art did ne'er presume  
 Through her quaint alembic strain;  
 None so sovran to the brain.  
 Nature, that did in thee excell,  
 Framed again no second smell.  
 Roses, violets, but toys  
 For the smaller sort of boys,  
 Or for greener damsels meant;  
 Thou 'rt the only manly scent.

Stinking'st of the stinking kind,  
 Filth of the mouth and fog of the mind,  
 Africa that brags her foyson,  
 Breeds no such prodigious poison,  
 Henbane, nightshade, both together,  
 Hemlock, aconite——

Nay rather,  
 Plant divine, of rarest virtue,  
 Blisters on the tongue would hurt you;  
 'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee,  
 None e'er prosper'd who defamed thee:  
 Irony all, and feign'd abuse,  
 Such as perplex Lovers use  
 At a need, when in despair  
 To paint forth their fairest fair,

Or in part but to express  
 That exceeding comeliness  
 Which their fancies does so strike,  
 They borrow language of Dislike,  
 And instead of Dearest Miss,  
 Honey, Jewel, Sweetheart, Bliss,  
 And, those forms of old admiring,  
 Call her Cockatrice and Syren,  
 Basilisk and all that 's evil,  
 Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,  
 Ethiop wench and Blackamoor,  
 Monkey, Ape, and twenty more,  
 Friendly Traitor, Loving Foe:  
 Not that she is truly so,  
 But no other way they know  
 A contentment to express,  
 Borders so upon excess,  
 That they do not rightly wot,  
 Whether it be pain or not.

Or, as men, constrain'd to part  
 With what 's nearest to their heart,  
 While their sorrow 's at the height,  
 Lose discrimination quite,  
 And their hasty wrath let fall,  
 To appease their frantic gall,  
 On the darling thing whatever,  
 Whence they feel it death to sever,  
 Though it be, as they, perforce,  
 Guiltless of the sad divorce.

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,  
 Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave ~~thee~~  
 For thy sake, TOBACCO, I  
 Would do anything but die;  
 And but seek to extend my days  
 Long enough, to sing thy praise.  
 But, as She, who once has been  
 A King's consort, is a Queen,  
 Ever after; nor will bate  
 Any tittle of her state,  
 Though a widow, or divorced,  
 So I, from thy converse forced,  
 The old name and style retain,  
 (A right Katherine of Spain;)  
 And a seat too 'mongst the joys  
 Of the blest Tobacco Boys:  
 Where though I by sour physician  
 Am debarr'd the full fruition  
 Of thy favours, I may catch  
 Some collateral sweets, and snatch

Sidelong odours, that give life  
 Like glances from a neighbour's wife;  
 And still dwell in the by-places,  
 And the suburbs of thy graces,  
 And in thy borders take delight,  
 An unconquer'd Canaanite.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my 'Friendly Traitor.' Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years: and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This Poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote 'Hester Savory.' I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but Tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me head aches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for Poetry, and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to shew you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The 'Tobacco,' being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes) perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, everybody will have seen it that I wish to see it: I have sent it to Malta.

I remain Dear W. and D— yours truly.

C. LAMB.

28th Sep., 1805.

['Last infirmity of Noble Mind.' *Lycidas*, line 70; correctly quoted for once. 'Hang Work.' This paragraph is the germ of the sonnet entitled *Work*, which Lamb wrote fourteen years later (see the letter to Bernard Barton, 11th September 1822). He seems always to have kept his thoughts in sight.

The *Farewell to Tobacco* was printed in the *Reflector*, No. IV, 1811 or 1812, and then in the *Works*, 1818. Lamb's farewell was frequently repeated; but it is a question whether he ever entirely left off smoking. Talfourd says that he did; but in 1826 there is evidence that he smoked for an hour with Taylor & Hessey's servant, on returning to Islington after a *London Magazine* dinner; and Mrs. Coe, who remembered Lamb at Widford very late in his life, credited him with the company of a black clay pipe. It was Lamb who, when Dr. Parr asked him how he managed to emit so much smoke, replied that he had toiled after it as other men after virtue. And Macready relates that he remarked in his presence that he wished to draw his last breath through a pipe and exhale it in a pun.

In lines 7 and 8 the endings, 'wide an acre' and 'Tobacco,' were changed to 'wide or scant' and 'Great Plant.']

## 136. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

November 10, 1805.

DEAR HAZLITT,

I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fire at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife, for instance: how tall she is and that she visits prank'd out like a Queen of the May with green streamers—a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about MONKEY, which can't so well be written—how to set it up for a fine Lady, and thought it had got Lovers, and was obliged to be convinc'd of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace;—these and such like Hows were in my head to tell you, but who can write? Also how Manning's come to town in spectacles, and studies phisic; is melancholy and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried thro' the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of Beauty. I have now for ever!—the small head, the [*here is drawn a long narrow eye*] long Eye,—that sort of peering curve, the wicked Italian mischief! the stick-at-nothing, Herodias' daughter kind of grace. You understand me. But you disappoint me, in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a Lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way: for instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. Dawe has chosen to illustrate the story of Sampson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy; the interview between the Jewish Hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his Locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs 'which of a nation armed contained the strength.' I don't remember, he *says* black: but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe with striking originality of conception has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's, in curl and quantity

resembling Mrs. Professor's, his Limbs rather stout, about such a man as my Brother or Rickman—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so bony as Dubois, the Clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact: for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a Temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British Navy.—Miss Dawe is about a portrait of sulky Fanny Imlay, alias Godwin: but Miss Dawe is of opinion that her subject is neither reserved nor sullen, and doubtless she will persuade the picture to be of the same opinion. However, the features are tolerably like—Too much of Dawes! Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall (I was prejudiced against him before) looking just as a Hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a Great Man we had. Nobody is left of any Name at all. His Secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to Tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologise, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday. Strange perverseness! I never went while you staid here, and now I *go to find you!* What other news is there, Mary?—What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the Comic. 'O! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the American Farmer. I dare say it isn't so good as he fancies; but a Book's a Book.' I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109 Russell St. this evening. I wish your brother wouldn't drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian Lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c.—and questioned about seducing a Duke from his wife and the State, makes answer:

Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?  
So may you blame some fair and chrystal river,  
For that some melancholic distracted man  
Hath drown'd himself in it.—

Our ticket was a £20. Alas!! are both yours blanks?

P.S.—Godwin has asked after you several times.

N.B.—I shall expect a Line from you, if but a bare Line, whenever you write to Russell St., and a Letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until parliament

time and franks. Luck to Ned Search and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her Love and Mary especially.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Addressed to Hazlitt at Wem. This is the first letter from Lamb to Hazlitt that has been preserved. The two men first met at Godwin's. Holcroft and Coleridge were disputing which was best—man as he was, or man as he is to be. Lamb broke in with, 'Give me man as he ought not to be.'

Hazlitt at this date was twenty-six, some three years younger than Lamb. He had just abandoned his project of being a painter and was settling down to literary work.

'Rickman's wife.' This passage holds the germ of Lamb's essay on 'The Behaviour of Married Persons,' first printed in the *Reflector*, No. IV, in 1811 or 1812, and afterwards included with the *Elia* essays.

'Monkey' was Louisa Martin, a little girl of whom Lamb was fond and whom he knew to the end of his life.

Manning studied medicine at the Westminster Hospital for six months previous to May 1806.

'The Leonardos of Oxford . . . the Blenheim Leonardo.' The only Leonardos at Oxford are the drawings at Christ Church. The Blenheim Leonardo was probably Beltraffio's 'Virgin and Child,' which used to be ascribed to Da Vinci, as indeed were many pictures he never painted. Hazlitt subsequently wrote sketches of the picture galleries of England.

'Mr. Dawe's gallery.' George Dawe (1781-1829), afterwards R.A., of whom Lamb wrote his essay, 'Recollections of a Late Royal Academician,' where he alludes again to the picture of Samson.

'Dyson's.' Dyson was a friend of Godwin.

'Miss Dawe.' I know nothing further of George Dawe's sister. Fanny Imlay was the unfortunate daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (by Gilbert Imlay, the author). She committed suicide in 1816.

Nelson was killed on 21st October 1805. Scott was his chaplain, and he was not killed.

Hume was Joseph Hume, an official at Somerset House, whom we shall meet again soon (see page 296).

'The American Farmer.' *Letters of an American Farmer*, by J. Hector St. John. This was the book which Hazlitt praised and which Mary Lamb wanted to read. Crèvecoeur was not a pseudonym, but the author's real name, which never appeared upon the book. The book was published in London in 1782, and was one of the most influential books of its time.

Charles Kemble, brother of John Philip Kemble and father of Fanny Kemble. John Hazlitt, the miniature painter, lived at 109 Russell Street.

Lamb's quotation, afterwards included in his *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, is from Webster's *The White Devil*, Act III, scene 1.

The £20 ticket was presumably in the lottery. Lamb's essay, 'The Illustrious Defunct,' shows him to have been interested in lotteries; and in a letter on 7th November 1809 Mary Lamb states that he wrote lottery puffs.

'Ned Search.' Hazlitt was engaged on an abridgment of *The Light of Nature Pursued*, in seven volumes, 1768-78, nominally by Edward Search, but really by Abraham Tucker.

'The new art of colouring' is a reference, I fancy, to Tingry's *Painter's and Varnisher's Guide*, 1804, mentioned again later.]

## 137. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 15th November 1805.]

DEAR MANNING,

Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed.

We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious—pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them—given them in clusters to Ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one, but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases. O! I forgot, bring the £10, for fear you should lose it. C. L.

[Manning was in England in 1805; it was not till spring 1806 that he at last set sail for China. This letter is addressed to him at 14 Broad Street, Golden Square.]

## 138. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Thursday, 15th Jan., 1806.

DEAR HAZLITT,

Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i.e.* in one lunar month from this time. Till when Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was naming something about a *Life of Fawcett*, to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explain'd to Manning, when he ask'd, *What Fawcett?* He innocently thought *Fawcett the player*. But Fawcett the Divine is known to many people, albeit unknown to the Chinese Enquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out Biographies, Richardson, Wilkes, Foot, Lee Lewis, without number: little trim things in two easy volumes price 12s. the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography. You might dish up a *Fawcettiad* in 3 months, and ask 60 or 80 Pounds for it. I should dare say

that Phillips would catch at it—I wrote to you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a Letter of business at Godwin's request.

Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

As for news—We have Miss Stoddart in our house, she has been with us a fortnight and will stay a week or so longer. She is one of the few people who are not in the way when they are with you. No tidings of Coleridge. Fenwick is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the Rules of the Fleet. On the same, or nearly the same, day, Fell, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and 4 children, I suppose, to the Parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise disposer of all things in us, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.*

Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I—

But may be I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I don't want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them.

When you have the inclination, I shall be very glad to have a letter from you.—Your brother and Mrs. H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them, but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep.

Sleep, too, I can't get for these damn'd winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue? Lunacy. But I trust it won't.

Yours, dear H., mad or sober.

. C. LAMB.

[Hazlitt's business was finding a publisher for his abridgment of Search (see page 272). Johnson was Priestley's publisher. A letter to Godwin from Coleridge in June 1803 (see Kegan Paul's *Life of Godwin*, ii. 96) had suggested such an abridgment, Coleridge adding that a friend of his would make it, and that he would write a preface and see the proofs through the press. Hence Godwin's share in the matter. Coleridge's part of the transaction was not carried out.

Lamb at this time must have been seeing much of the Godwins, for he had begun, with his sister, the *Tales from Shakespear* for them, and, as we shall see, had completed *The King and Queen of Hearts*.

Hazlitt's *Life of Joseph Fawcett* (? 1758–1804), the poet and dissenting preacher of Walthamstow and Old Jewry, whom he had known intimately,



was not written. The Fawcett of whom Manning, the Chinese Enquirer, was thinking was John Fawcett, famous as Dr. Pangloss and Caleb Quotern.

'The Fleet.' The prison for debtors in Farringdon Street. Closed in 1844. The Rules of the Fleet were the limits within which prisoners for debt were under certain conditions permitted to live: the north side of Ludgate Hill, the Old Bailey up to Fleet Lane, Fleet Lane to Fleet Market, and then back to Ludgate Hill. The Rules cost money: £10 for the first £100 of the debt and for every additional £100, £4. Later, Fenwick settled in America. The Latin quotation is from Juvenal, x. 365, or xiv. 315, meaning that good sense is the one indispensable authority to follow.

There is no date, but the following note may with some propriety come here.]

## 139. TO MRS. WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR MRS. G.,

Having observed with some concern that Mr. Godwin is a little fastidious in what he eats for supper, I herewith beg to present his palate with a piece of dried salmon. I am assured it is the best that swims in Trent. If you do not know how to dress it, allow me to add that it should be cut in thin slices and boiled in paper *previously prepared in butter*. Wishing it exquisite, I remain,—Much as before, yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

Some add *mashed potatoes*.

## 140. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 1st February 1806.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have seen the Books which you ordered, booked at the White Horse Inn, Cripplegate, by the Kendal waggon this day 1st Feb<sup>y</sup>. 1806; you will not fail to see after them in time. They are directed to you at Grasmere. We have made some alteration in the Editions since your sister's directions. The handsome quarto Spencer which she authorized Mary to buy for £2. 12. 6, when she brought it home in triumph proved to be *only the Fairy Queen*: so we got them to take it again and I have procured instead a Folio, which luckily contains, besides all the Poems, the view of the State of Ireland, which is difficult to meet with. The Spencer, and the Chaucer, being noble old books, we did not think Stockdale's modern volumes would look so well beside them; added to which I don't know whether you are aware that the Print is *excessive small*, same as Eleg. Extracts, or smaller, not calculated for eyes in age; and Shakespear

is one of the last books one should like to give up, perhaps the one just before the Dying Service in a large Prayer book. So we have used our own discretion in purchasing Pope's fine Quarto in six volumes, which may be read *ad ultimam horam vitæ*. It is bound like Law Books (rather, half bound) and the Law Robe I have ever thought as comely and gentlemanly a garb as a Book would wish to wear. The state of the purchase then stands thus,

Urry's Chaucer	£1.	16	—
Pope's Shakespeare	2.	2	—
Spenser		14	—
Milton	1.	5	—
Packing Case &c.		3.	6
		<hr/>	
		6.	— 6

Which your Brother immediately repaid us. He has the Bills for all (by his desire) except the Spenser, which we took no bill with (not looking to have our accounts audited): so for that and the Case he took a separate receipt for 17/6. N.B. there is writing in the Shakespeare: but it is only *variæ lectiones* which some careful gentleman, the former owner, was at the pains to insert in a very neat hand from 5 Commentators. It is no defacement. The fault of Pope's edition is, that he has comically and coxcombically marked the Beauties: which is vile, as if you were to chalk up the cheek and across the nose of a handsome woman in red chalk to shew where the comeliest parts lay. But I hope the noble type and Library-appearance of the Books will atone for that. With the Books come certain Books and Pamphlets of G. Dyer, Presents or rather Decoy-ducks of the Poet to take in his thus-far obliged friends to buy his other works; as he takes care to inform them in M.S. notes to the Title Pages, 'G. Dyer, Author of other Books printed for Longman &c.' The books have lain at your dispatchful brother's a 12 months, to the great staling of most of the subjects. The three Letters and what is else written at the beginning of the respective *Presents* will ascertain the division of the Property. If not, none of the Donees, I dare say, will grudge a community of property in this case. We were constrained to pack 'em how we could, for room. Also there comes W. Hazlitt's book about Human Action, for Coleridge; a little song book for Sarah Coleridge; a Box for Hartley which your Brother was to have sent, but now devolved on us—I don't know from whom it came, but the things altogether were too much for Mr. (I've forgot his name) to take charge of; a Paraphrase on the King and Queen of Hearts, of which I being the Author beg Mr. Johnny Wordsworth's

acceptance and opinion. *Liberal Criticism*, as G. Dyer declares, I am always ready to attend to!—And that's all, I believe. N.B. I must remain Debtor to Dorothy for 200 pens: but really Miss Stoddart (women are great gulfs of Stationery), who is going home to Salisbury and has been with us some weeks, has drained us to the very last pen: by the time S. T. C. passes thro' London I reckon I shall be in full feather. No more news has transpired of that Wanderer. I suppose he has found his way to some of his German friends.

A propos of Spencer (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an a propos), I was discoursing on Poetry (as one's apt to deceive oneself, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same: as Lovers do) with a Young Gentleman of my office who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal Modern Poets, and I happen'd to mention Epithalamiums and that I could shew him a very fine one of Spencer's. At the mention of this, my Gentleman, who is a very fine Gentleman, and is brother to the Miss Evans who Coleridge so narrowly escaped marrying, pricked up his ears and exprest great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *any thing by him*. Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated POOR SPENCER! I begged to know the reason of his ejaculation, thinking that Time had by this time softened down any calamities which the Bard might have endured—'Why, poor fellow!' said he, 'he has lost his wife!' 'Lost his wife?' said I, 'Who are you talking of?' 'Why, Spencer,' said he, 'I've read the Monody he wrote on the occasion, and a *very pretty thing it is*.' This led to an explanation (it could be delay'd no longer) that the sound Spencer, which when Poetry is talk'd of generally excites an image of an old Bard in a Ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my Gentleman a quite contrary image of The Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are publish'd with Lady Di. Beauclerk's Designs.

Nothing like defining of Terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable Criticism, but for this timely explanation.

N.B. At the beginning of *Edm. Spencer* (to prevent mistakes) I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers on Shakspear, a Sonnet of Spencer's never printed among his poems. It is curious as being manly and rather Miltonic, and as a Sonnet of

Spenser's with nothing in it about Love or Knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you.

C. L.

1 Feb., 1806.

[The Chaucer was the edition begun in 1711 by John Urry, completed by others, and published in 1721.

'Eyes in age.' Wordsworth, although only thirty-five, was already having trouble with his sight.

'Hazlitt's book about Human Action, for Coleridge.' *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, 1805.

'A Paraphrase on the King and Queen of Hearts.' This was a little verse-book for children by Lamb, illustrated by Mulready and published by T. Hodgkins (for the Godwins) in 1806. It was discovered through this passage in this letter, and has become a sale-room rarity much to be desired. The title ran, *The King and Queen of Hearts, with the Rogueries of the Knave who stole away the Queen's Pies*.

Coleridge had left Malta on 21st September 1805. He went to Naples, and from there to Rome in January 1806, where he stayed until 18th May.

'A propos of Spenser.' This portion of the letter, owing to a mistake of Talfourd's, is usually tacked on to one dated June 1806.

'Miss Evans.' Coleridge's first love. Her brother was at Christ's Hospital with him.

'Poor Spenser.' William Robert Spencer (1769-1834) was the author of *jeux d'esprit* and poems. He is now known, if at all, by his ballad of *Bed Gellert*. He married the widow of Count Spretti, and in 1804 published a book of elegies entitled *The Year of Sorrow*. Spencer was among the translators of Bürger's *Leonore*, his version being illustrated by Lady Diana Beauclerk (his great-aunt) in 1796. Lamb used this anecdote as a little article in the *Reflector*, No. II, 1811, entitled 'On the Ambiguities arising from Proper Names' (see vol. i of my edition). Lamb, however, by usually spelling the real poet with a 'c,' did nothing towards avoiding the ambiguity!

#### 141. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Dated at end: 19th February 1806.]

DEAR H.,

Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the daytime, so it did not burn the house down, but did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired: his nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out: well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer.

I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading.

Three or four most capital auctions of Pictures advertised. In May,

Welbore Ellis Agar's, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says. In March, Sir George Young's in Stratford-place (where Cosway lives), and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announc'd for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdowne's Pictures in March; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Truchsessian gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here?

T'other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, Fast-day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft's Wife, and Daughter, their first visit at our house.

Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madonna and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after ignes fatui. He is a clever man. By the bye, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his shew cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that shew cupboard excels the shew things you see in windows—an old woman—damn her name—but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw, equal to Cooper and them fellows. But for oil pictures!—what has he [to] do with Madonas? if the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent-Garden-pit-door crowd to see her. It an't his style of beauty, is it?—But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint.

Manning is not gone to China, but talks of going this Spring. God forbid!

Coleridge not heard of.

I, going to leave off smoke. In mean time am so smoky with last night's 10 Pipes, that I must leave off.

Mary begs her kind remembrances.

Pray write to us—

This is no Letter, but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

N.B.—Have taken a room at 3/- a week, to be in between 5 & 8 at night, to avoid my nocturnal alias knock-eternal visitors. The first-fruits of my retirement has been a farce which goes to manager to-morrow. Wish my ticket luck.

God bless you, and do write,—Yours, *fumosissimus*,

C. LAMB.

Wednesday, 19 Feb., 1806.

[Johnson was the publisher whom we have already seen considering Hazlitt's abridgment of *The Light of Nature Pursued*.

Lamb was always interested in sales of pictures: the on-view days gave him some of his best opportunities of seeing good painting. The Truchsessian

Picture Gallery was in New Road, opposite Portland Place. Exhibitions were held annually, the pictures being for sale.

Loftus was Tom Loftus of Wisbech, a cousin of Hazlitt.

Holcroft's wife at that time, his fourth, was Louisa Mercier, who afterwards married Lamb's friend, James Kenney, the dramatist. The daughter referred to was probably Fanny Holcroft, who subsequently wrote novels and translations.

Cooper, the miniature painter, was Samuel Cooper (1609-72), a connection by marriage of Pope's mother, and the painter of Cromwell and other interesting men. Mr. Blunden conjectures the miniature of the old woman to be that now treasured in the Maidstone Museum.

Lamb's *N.B.* contains his first mention of his farce, *Mr. H.* We are not told where the 3s. room was situated. Possibly in the Temple.

'Fumosissimus.' Tobacco not left off yet.]

#### 142. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[8th March 1806.]

DEAR H.,

I send you Tingry (pro[mising you instruction] and [some] entertainment). I should not have delayed it [so] long, but have been waiting for Loftus's commussion. I have made several graphical tours round and in the metropolis without discovering any trees that I would venture to recommend: id est, I have gone no further than the shop [window], for such is my modesty, that if I explored internal se[crets I] should be laying out complimentary shillings rather than give trouble without remuneration. I have sent you a pretty emblematical thing which I happen to have in my possession: you may get some hints from it, though perhaps you may think it too tame: not sufficiently romantic,—the boughs not shooting fantastically enough, &c. But to supply poetry and wildness, you may read the *American Farmer* over again. Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will put my head within the shops—only speak your wants.

N.B.—If I do not hear in 4 days that you have received Tingry &c., safe, I shall put you to the expence of a Letter to ascertain whether this parcel have [*sic*] been deliver'd to you.

Yours ever,

C. L.

Johnson shall not be forgot at his month's end.

['Tingry.' *The Painter's and Varnisher's Guide.*

Hazlitt seems to have wanted studies of trees for a picture he was contemplating.]

## 143. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

March 15, 1806.

DEAR H.,

I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I booked off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorised any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after. What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going, a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2s. 6d. Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month; and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Wellbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you, perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire Nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000 (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid); one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bona fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music-piece by Titian—a thousand-pound picture—five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing; none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed; all leaning separate ways, but so easy—like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious—as good as Shakspeare's 'Twelfth Night,'—*almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgetty passions for a week after—more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room—his study (only that and the library are shown)—when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures

worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads!

Yours, my dear painter,

C. LAMB.

[Angerstein's was the house of John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823), the financier, in Pall Mall. He had a magnificent collection of pictures, £60,000 worth of which were bought on his death by the nation, to form the nucleus of our National Gallery. A portrait of Angerstein by Lawrence hangs there. The Titian of which Lamb speaks is now attributed to the school of Titian. It is called 'A Concert.' Angerstein's Claudes are also in the National Gallery.]

#### 144. TO THOMAS MANNING

May 10, 1806.

MY DEAR MANNING,

I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony and then——. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you; and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little Mandarin for our mantle-piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, 'The Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Midsummer Night,' 'Much Ado,'



'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and 'Cymbeline:' 'The Merchant of Venice' is in forwardness. I have done 'Othello' and 'Macbeth,' and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It is to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan anthropophagi. *Quam homo homini præstat!* but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I daresay all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

One thing more. When you get to Canton, you will most likely see a young friend of mine, Inspector of Teas, named Ball. He is a very good fellow and I should like to have my name talked of in China. Give my kind remembrances to the same Ball.

Good bye.

C. L.

I have made strict inquiries through my friend Thompson as to your affairs with the Comp<sup>y</sup>. If there had been a committee yesterday an order would have been sent to the captain to draw on them for your passage money, but there was no Committee. But in the secretary's orders to receive you on board, it was specified that the Company would defray your passage, all the orders about you to the super-cargoes are certainly in your ship. Here I will manage anything you may want

done. What can I add but take care of yourself. We drink tea with the Holcrofts to-morrow.

[Addressed] Mr. Manning, Passenger on Board the *Thames*, East Indiaman, Portsmouth.

[Manning sailed for China this month. He did not return to England until 1817. His nominal purpose was to practise medicine there, not to spread Christianity, as Lamb suggests—probably in fun.

'Quam homo': How one man excels another! Terence, *Eunuchus*, II. II. I. This is Manning's reply to Lamb's letter:

DEAR LAMB—As we are not sailed yet, and I have a few minutes, why should not I give you a line to say that I received your kind letter yesterday, and shall read it again before I have done with it. I am sorry I had not time to call on Mary, but I did not even call on my own Father, and he's seventy, and loves me like a Father. I don't know that you can do anything for me at the India House: if you hear anything there about me, communicate it to Mr. Crabtree, 13 Newgate Street. I am not dead, nor dying—some people go into Yorkshire for four [years], and I have no currant jelly aboard. Tell Holcroft I received his kind letter.

T. MANNING for ever.

The probability is that Godwin or Mrs. Godwin thought of the scheme of the *Tales from Shakespear* and employed the Lambs to carry it out. It is interesting to know that a French author had anticipated them. In 1783 had been published in London, *Contes Moraux Amusans et Instructifs à l'usage de la Jeunesse, Tirés des Tragédies de Shakespear*. Par P. Pettin.

Ball had been at Christ's Hospital.]

#### 145. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 26th June 1806.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We got the six pounds safe in your sister's letters—are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W.—hope all is well over by this time. 'A fine boy!—have you any more? one more and a girl—poor copies of me,' vide MR. H. a farce which the Proprietors have done me the honor—but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N.B. the ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I writing on the Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend.

(Copy of a Letter from Mr. R<sup>d</sup>. Wroughton)

Sir, Your Piece of Mr. H— I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, by the Proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves—the Piece shall be sent to you for your

Alterations in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my Hands but with the Proprietors.

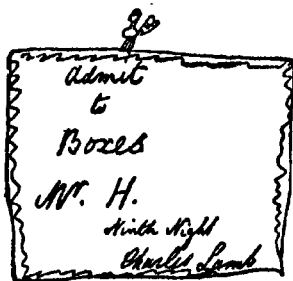
(dated)  
66 Gower St.,  
Wednesday  
June 11, 1806.

I am Sir,  
Your obedient ser<sup>t</sup>.,  
R<sup>d</sup>. WROUGHTON.

On the following Sunday Mr. Tobin comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces—different sorts of pieces—what is the best way of offering a piece—how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece—how to judge of the merits of a piece—how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted—and my piece—and your piece—and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted—

I am not sure that when *my poor Brother* bequeathed the care of his pieces to Mr. James Tobin he did not therein convey a legacy which in some measure mollified the otherwise first stupefactions of grief. It can't be expected that the present Earl Nelson passes all this time in watering the laurels of the Admiral with Right Reverend Tears. Certainly he steals a fine day now and then to plot how to lay out the grounds and mansion at Burnham most suitably to the late Earl's taste, if he had lived, and how to spend the hundred thousand pound parliament has given him in erecting some little neat monument to his memory.

MR. H. I wrote that in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The Managers I thank my stars have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received and the ample—



I think this will be as good a pattern for Orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border round, neat not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo?—simply nothing? Or perhaps the Comic Muse?

The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Cb. Lamb* will do. BOXES now I think on it I'll have in Capitals. The rest in a neat Italian hand. Or better perhaps, *Boxes*, in old English character, like Madoc or Thalaba?

I suppose you know poor Mountague has lost his wife. That has been the reason for my sending off all we have got of yours separately. I thought it a bad time to trouble him. The Tea 25 lb. in 5 5 lb. Papers, two sheets to each, with the chocolate which we were afraid Mrs. W. would want, comes in one Box and the Hars in a small one. I booked them off last night by the Kendal waggon. There comes with this letter (no, it comes a day or two earlier) a Letter for you from the Doctor at Malta, about Coleridge, just received. Nothing of certainty, you see, only that he is not at Malta. We sup't with the Clarksons one night—Mrs. Clarkson pretty well. Mr. C. somewhat fidgety, but a good man. The Baby has been on a visit to Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Novelist and morals-trainer, but is returned. A ludicrous thought struck me. These two Ladies have both, as you may have *seen*, great bxttxms. I fancied upon their first meeting and salutation, while the Ladies were bowing and kissing, the two bxttxms saluting and doing the honour of a first meeting independently; as I have seen, or fancy to have seen, when two great Ladies have met on a country visit, their two housekeepers at the same instant in the store-room saluting and doing equal courtesies in separate formality.

Mary is just stuck fast in All's Well that Ends Well. She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boy's clothes. She begins to think Shakspear must have wanted Imagination. I to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this it will be necessary to leave off Tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. W. Hazlitt is in Town. I took him to see a very pretty girl p'fessedly, where there were two young girls—the very head and sum of the Girlery was two young girls—they neither laughed nor sneered nor giggled nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a

thing as Youth and Beauty, till he tore me away before supper in perfect misery and owned he could not bear young girls. They drove him mad. So I took him home to my old Nurse, where he recover'd perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently, I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an Author, I take it, is never to pay anything. But non cuivis autigit adire Corinthum. The Managers I thank my stars have settled that question for me.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth's third child, Thomas, who did not grow up, was born 16th June, 1806.

'A fine boy!' The quotation is from Mr. H's soliloquy after the discovery of his name: 'No son of mine shall exist, to bear my ill-fated name. No nurse come chuckling, to tell me it is a boy. No midwife, leering at me from under the lids of professional gravity. I dreamed of caudle. (*Sings in a melancholy tone*) Lullaby, Lullaby,—hush-a-by-baby—how like its papa it is!—(*makes motions as if he was nursing*). And then, when grown up, "Is this your son, sir?" "Yes, sir, a poor copy of me,—a sad young dog!—just what his father was at his age,—I have four more at home." Oh! oh! oh!'

We have already met James Tobin, brother of the late dramatist, John Tobin. Nelson's brother, who succeeded him, was made an earl in 1805.

'Poor Mountague' would be Basil Montagu, whose second wife had just died. He married afterwards Anne Skepper, whom Lamb came to know well, and of whom he speaks in his *Elia* essay, 'Oxford in the Vacation.'

The doctor was Dr. Stoddart. Coleridge had left Malta some months before, as we have seen. He had also left Rome and was in some foreign town unknown, probably not far from Leghorn, whence he sailed for England in the following month, reaching Portsmouth in August.

The Baby was Mrs. Godwin, and Charlotte Smith was the poetess (of great fame in her day, but now forgotten), who was then living at Tilford, near Farnham, in Surrey. She died in the following October.

Hazlitt's political pamphlet was his *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806.

'Non cuivis . . .': Not every one has had the luck to visit Corinth, i.e. to indulge himself in that way. Adapted from Horace, *Epistles*, I. xvii. 36.]

#### 146. TO THOMAS MANNING

5th Dec., 1806.

Tuthill is at Crabtree's who has married Tuthill's sister.

MANNING,

Your letter dated Hottentots, August the what-was-it? came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China—Canton—bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty, whether it can go to-morrow by a ship

which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran-new news (the latest edition), which will but grow the better, like oranges, for a sea voyage. Oh, that you should be so many hemispheres off—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why, the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastile. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France—you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten-to-one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel sailing. Know then that he has found means to obtain leave from Bonaparte without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them, to come home; and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's. I have likewise seen his wife, this elegant little French woman whose hair reaches to her heels—by the same token that Tom (Tommy H.) took the comb out of her head, not expecting the issue, and it fell down to the ground to his utter consternation, two ells long. An't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called 'The Vindictive Man,' was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers, they have had some squabble, and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. de Camp, a vulgar brother of Miss De Camp, took his. He is a fellow with the make of a jockey, and the air of a lamplighter. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily Goldfinch, taken out of the 'Road to Ruin,' not only the same character, but the identical Goldfinch—the same as Falsatiff is in two plays of Shakspeare. As the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that H. had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the 'Road to Ruin'; and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his 'That's your sort,' 'Go it'—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a whore was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalised as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides,

her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, H. took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the play-bill express as much, not reckoning one woman and one whore; and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c. &c.,—to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce—for a minute or two—and here they all had their ten-minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious account how he was now a lawyer but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c.; which first set the audience a-gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor H. I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. From what I can learn he has saved nothing. You and I were hoping one day that he had; but I fear he has nothing but his pictures and books, and a no very flourishing business, and to be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c.! God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted—it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it, and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent; and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton (bless his fat face—he is not a bad actor in some things), to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest; what a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to

modesty to do all things without noise or pomp! I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for W. says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melo-drama is announced for every day till then: and 'a new farce is in rehearsal,' is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is 'Mr. H.,' no more; how simple, how taking! A great H. sprawling over the play-bill and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich—all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is—but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strassburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes, I will; but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, 'Hogsflesh,' all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him—that's the idea—how flat it is here!—but how whimsical in the farce! and only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after—but all China will ring of it by and by. N.B. (But this is a secret). The Professor has got a tragedy coming out with the young Roscius in it in January next, as we say—January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written anything like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and may never come again? I don't—but your going away, and all about you, is a threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking—it has come to me when I have been dull with anything, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much—but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written—so—. Those 'Tales from Shakespear' are near coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author: he has been in such a way lately—Dawe the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's and says nothing—then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love—but it seems he was only meditating a work,—'The Life of Morland,'—the young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips and noisy Martin.



Good Heaven! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if 'Mr. H.' has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copy-right. Nothing if it fails; and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the Great Wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London Wall by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton?—if you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. Amongst many queer cattle I have and do meet with at the India Ho. I always liked his behaviour. Tell him his friend Evans &c. are well. Woodruff not dead yet. May-be, you'll think I have not said enough of Tuthill and the Holcrofts. Tuthill is a noble fellow, as far as I can judge. The Holcrofts bear their disappointment pretty well, but indeed they are sadly mortified. Mrs. H. is cast down. It was well, if it were but on this account, that Tuthill is come home. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed, I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the tweedledees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

Come back one day.

C. LAMB.

[The letter is addressed to 'T. Manning, Esq., Canton.' At the end Lamb adds:

Holcroft has just writ to me as follows:

'DEAR SIR, Miss L. has informed us you are writing to Manning. Will you be kind enough to inform him directly from me that I and my family are most truly anxious for his safety; that if praying could bring down blessings on him we should pray morning noon and night; that his and our good friends the Tuthills are once more happily safe in England, and that I earnestly entreat not only a single letter but a correspondence with him whenever the thing [is] practicable, with such an address as may make letters from me likely to find him. In short, dear sir, if you will be kind enough to speak of me to Manning, you cannot speak with greater friendship and respect than I feel.

'Yours with true friendship and kindness.'

In the beginning of this letter we see the first germ of an idea afterwards developed in the letter to Barron Field of 31st August 1817, and again, more fully, in the *Elia* essay 'Distant Correspondents.'

Tuthill, afterwards Sir George Leman Tuthill (1772-1835), was the physician who, on a visit to Paris, was included among the English *détenus* and held a captive for several years. He was released only after his wife had made a personal appeal to Napoleon on his return from hunting. The words

'incredible romantic pretences' refer chaffingly to Manning's application to Napoleon for liberty to return to England two or three years previously.

Holcroft's *Vindictive Man* was produced at Drury Lane on 20th November 1806. It was a complete failure. His *Road to Ruin*, produced in 1792 at Covent Garden, with 'Gentleman' Lewis as Goldfinch, had been a great success and is still occasionally played. Holcroft was also a very voluminous author and translator, and the partner of his brother-in-law, Mercier, in a printing business, which, however, was unprofitable. Tommy was Holcroft's son.

'The dames of Strasburg.' In *Tristram Shandy*, vol. iv, beginning.

'The Professor has . . . a tragedy.' This was *Faulkener*, for which Lamb wrote the prologue. Owing to the capriciousness of Master Betty, the Young Roscius, it was not produced until 16th December 1807, and then with Elliston in the principal part. It was only partially successful, a result for which Godwin blamed Holcroft, who had revised the play.

Mary Lamb's new work was either *Mrs. Leicester's School* or the *Poetry for Children*.

'Mr. Dawe is turned author.' *The Life of George Morland*, by George Dawe, was published in 1807.

'Noisy Martin.' Martin Charles Burney, the captain's son, to whom twelve years later Lamb was to dedicate the second volume of his *Works* in a beautiful sonnet of appreciation.

Coleridge's intended series of lectures on Taste was abandoned. He did not actually deliver any until 12th January 1808.]

#### 147. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 11th December (1806).]

Mary's Love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write—

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Mr. H. came out last night and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *Letter*. We are pretty stout about it, have had plenty of condoling friends, but after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the Prologue in most of the Morning Papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witness'd to a Prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard! a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted—and set no great store by; and Mr. H——!!

The quantity of friends we had in the house, my brother and I being in Public Offices, &c. was astonishing—but they yielded at length to a few hisses. A hundred hisses—damn the word, I write it like kisses—how different—a hundred hisses outweigh a 1000 Claps. The former come more directly from the Heart—Well, 'tis withdrawn and there is an end.

Better Luck to us—

C. L.

11 Dec.—(turn over).

P.S. Pray when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind Loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Xmas—as I shall have but a day or two,—and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

[*Mr. H.* was produced at Drury Lane on 10th December, with Elliston in the title-role. Lamb's account of the evening is supplemented by Hazlitt in his essay 'On Great and Little Things,' and by Crabb Robinson in his *Diary*, where we learn that Lamb himself joined in the hissing, if he did not actually lead it.

The curious thing is that the management of Drury Lane put *Mr. H.* on again two days later, advertising it, with theatrical-managerial licence, thus: 'The new Farce of *Mr. H.* performed for the first time last night was received by an overflowing audience with universal applause, and will be repeated for the second time to-morrow'; but on the playbill for the following night was this notice: 'The new Farce of *Mr. H.* is withdrawn at the request of the author.'

Six years later *Mr. H.* had a run in Philadelphia where, in 1813, the play was published.]

## 148. TO SARAH STODDART

December 11 [1806].

Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c. God bless you!

DEAR SARAH,

Mary is a little cut at the ill success of '*Mr. H.*,' which came out last night and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of '*Mr. H.*' for fear of ill-luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

God bless you, dear Sarah,

Yours most truly, C. L.

Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write.

[Miss Stoddart had returned to England in the autumn of 1805.]

## 149. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 29th January 1807.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We have book'd off from Swan and Two Necks, Lad Lane, this day (per Coach) the Tales from Shakespear. You will forgive the plates, when I tell you they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the bad baby, who from mischief (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide Merch. Venice) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it—to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, Nic Bottom, and which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's Xtian name—and one of Hamlet, and Grave digging, a scene which is not hinted at in the story, and you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers—the rest are Giants and Giantesses. Suffice it, to save our taste and damn our folly, that we left it all to a friend W. G.—who in the first place cheated me into putting a name to them, which I did not mean, but do not repent, and then wrote a puff about their *simplicity*, &c., to go with the advertisement as in my name! Enough of this egregious dupery.—I will try to abstract the load of teasing circumstances from the Stories and tell you that I am answerable for *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Timon*, *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, for occasionally a tail piece or correction of grammar, for none of the cuts and all of the spelling. The rest is my Sister's.—We think *Pericles* of hers the best, and *Othello* of mine—but I hope all have some good. As You Like It we like least.

So much, only begging you to tear out the cuts and give them to Johnny, as 'Mrs. Godwin's fancy.'

C. L.

Thursday,

29 Jan., 1807.

Our Love to all.

I had almost forgot.

My part of the Preface begins in the middle of a sentence, in last but one page after a colon thus

:—*which if they be happily so done &c.*

the former part hath a more feminine turn and does hold me up something as an instructor to young Ladies: but upon my modesty's honour I wrote it not.

Godwin told My Sister that the Baby chose the Subjects. A fact in Taste.

['The bad baby.' Mrs. Godwin.

Lamb has run his pen lightly through 'God bless me,' at the beginning of the postscript.

The plates to the *Tales from Shakespear* were designed probably by Mulready.]

150. TO THOMAS AND CATHERINE CLARKSON

[P.M. June (1807).]

DEAR MR. AND MRS. CLARKSON,

You will wish to know how we performed our journey. My sister was tolerably quiet until we got to Chelmsford, where she began to be very bad indeed, as your friends William Knight and his family can tell you when you see them. What I should have done without their kindness I don't know, but among other acts of great attention, they provided me with a waistcoat to confine her arms, by the help of which we went through the rest of our journey. But sadly tired and miserably depressed she was before we arrived at Hoxton. We got there about half past eight; and now 'tis all over, I have great satisfaction that she is among people who have been used to her. In all probability a few months or even weeks will restore her (her last illness confined her ten weeks) but if she does recover I shall be very careful how I take her so far from home again. I am so fatigued, for she talked in the most wretched desponding way conceivable, particularly the last three stages, she talked all the way,—so that you won't expect me to say much, or even to express myself as I should do in thanks for your kindnesses. My sister will acknowledge them when she can.—

I shall not have heard how she is to day until too late for the Post, but if any great change takes place for better or worse, I shall certainly let you know

She tells me something about having given away one of my coats to your servant. It is a new one, and perhaps may be of small use to him. If you can get it me again, I shall very willingly give him a compensation. I shall also be much obliged by your sending in a parcel all the manuscripts, books, &c. she left behind. I want in particular the Dramatic Extracts, as my purpose is to make use of the remainder of my holydays in completing them at the British Museum, which will be employment & money in the end.

I am exceedingly harrassed with the journey, but that will go off in a day or two, and I will set to work. I know you will grieve for us, but I hope my sister's illness is not worse than many she has got through before. Only I am afraid the fatigue of the journey may affect her general

health. You shall have notice how she goes on. In the mean time, accept our kindest thanks.

\*  
[Signature cut off.]

[The letter tells its own story only too clearly: the Lambs had been on a visit to the Clarksons at Bury St. Edmunds; Mary Lamb had fallen ill while there; and her brother had just left her once more at the Hoxton asylum.]

The next letter contains the beginning of an elaborate hoax, maintained by Lamb and Hume (a clerk in the Victualling Office), in which Hazlitt, although a victim, played his part.]

### 151. TO JOSEPH HUME

29 Dec., 1807.

Alas, sir, I cannot be among you. My fate is still not to know on which side my bread is butter'd. I hang between two Engagements perpetually, and the worst always comes first. The Devil always takes care to clap in with a retainer when he sees God about to offer a fee—cold bones of mutton and leather-roasted potatoes at Pimlico at ten must carry it away from a certain Turkey and a contingent plumb-pudding at Montpelier at four (I always spell plumb-pudding with a *b*, *p-l-u-m-b*—I think it reads fatter and more suetty).

I suppose you know what had happen'd to our poor friend Hazlitt. If not, take it as I read it in the *Morning Post* or *Fashionable World* of this morning:—

'Last night Mr. H., a portrait painter in Southampton Buildings, Holborn, put an end to his existence by cutting his throat in a shocking manner. It is supposed that he must have committed his purpose with a pallet knife, as the edges of the cicatrice or wound were found besmeared with a yellow consistence, but the knife could not be found. The reasons of this rash act are not assigned; an unfortunate passion has been mentioned; but nothing certain is known. The deceased was subject to hypochondria, low spirits, but he had lately seemed better, having paid more than usual attention to his dress and person. Besides being a painter, he had written some pretty things in prose and verse.'

God bless me, ten o'clock! I have cut out the paragraph, and will shew it you entire. I have not time to transcribe more,

Yours,

C. LAMB.

[In reply came one from Hume, dated 11th January 1808, referring to a humble petition and remonstrance by Hazlitt, dated 10th January 1808,

showing that he is not dead. The petition will be found in full in *Lamb and Hazlitt*. It ends thus:

With all the sincerity of a man doubtful between life and death, the petitioner declares that he looks upon the said Charles Lamb as the ring-leader in this unjust conspiracy against him, and as the sole cause and author of the jeopardy he is in: but that as losers have leave to speak, he must say, that, if it were not for a poem he wrote on Tobacco about two years ago, a farce called *Mr. H*— he brought out last winter with more wit than discretion in it, some prologues and epilogues he has since written with good success, and some lively notes he is at present writing on dead authors, he sees no reason why he should not be considered as much a dead man as himself, and the undertaker spoken to accordingly.

The next letter continues the joke.]

## 152. TO JOSEPH HUME

12 January, 1808.

DEAR SIR,

The strange rumours which have been spread about since the death of our respected friend, as well as some things which have come under my own observation, which I do not care to trust to the ordinary communication of a Post, but reserve them for the especial confidence of your most valued ear in private,—these things, without much help from a rainy day or time of the year which usually disposes men to sadness, have contributed to make me not a little serious and thoughtful of late. I have run over in my mind the various treatises which I have perused in the course of a studious, and, I hope, innocently employed life, on the nature of disembodied Spirits and the causes of their revisiting the earth. The fact I will take for granted; presuming that I am not addressing an Atheist. I find the most commonly assigned reason to be, *for the revealing of hidden Treasures which the Deceased had boarded up in his or her Lifetime*. Now though I cannot sufficiently admire the providence of God who by this means has oftentimes restored great heaps of Gold and Silver to the circulation of the Living, thereby sparing the iterately plowed and now almost effete wombs of Peru & Mexico, which would need another Sarah's miracle to replenish, yet in the particular case of the Defunct I cannot but suspect some other cause, and not this, to have called him from his six foot bed of earth. For it is highly improbable that he should have accumulated any such vast treasures, for the revealing of which a miracle was needed, without some suspicion of the fact among his friends during his Lifetime. I for my part always looked upon our dear friend as a man rich rather in the gifts of his mind than

in earthly treasures. He had few rents or comings in, that I was ever aware of, small (if any) landed property, and by all that I could witness he subsisted more upon the well-timed contributions of a few chosen friends who knew his worth, than upon any Estate which could properly be called his own. I myself have contributed my part. God knows, I speak not this in reproach. I have never taken, nor indeed did the deceased offer, any *written acknowledgments* of the various sums which he has had of me, by which I could make the fact manifest to the legal eye of an Executor or Administrator. He was not a Man to affect these niceties in his transactions with his friends. He would often say, money was nothing between intimate acquaintances, that Golden Streams had no Ebb, that a Purse mouth never regorged, that God loved a cheerful giver but the Devil hated a free taker, that a paid Loan makes angels groan, with many such like sayings: he had always free and generous notions about money. His nearest friends know this best. Induced by these considerations I give up that commonly received notion of Revelable Treasures in our friend's case. Neither am I too forward to adopt that vulgar superstition of some hidden Murder to be brought to light; which yet I do not universally reject: for when I revolve, that the Defunct was naturally of a discursive and communicative temper (though of a gloomy and close aspect, as born under Saturn), a great repeater of conversations which he generally carried away verbatim and would repeat with syllabic exactness in the next company where he was received (by which means I that have staid at home have often reaped the profit of his travels without stirring from my elbow chair), I cannot think that if He had been present at so remarkable circumstance as a murder he would so soon have forgotten it as to make no mention of it at the next place where he dined or supt, or that he could have restrained himself from giving the particulars of a matter of fact like that in his life time. I am sure I have often heard him dilate upon occurrences of a much less interesting sort than that in question. I am most inclined to support that opinion which favors the Establishing of some Speculative Point in Religion: a frequent cause, says Wierus, for Spirits returning to the Earth, to confute Atheists, &c. When I consider the Education which our friend received from a venerable Parent, his religious destination, his nurture at a Seminary appropriated to young Ministers: but whatever the cause of this re-appearance may prove to be, we may now with truth assert that our deceased friend has attained to one object of his pursuits, one hour's separate existence gives a dead man clearer notions of metaphysics than all the treatises which in this state of carnal entanglement the least-immersed spirit can out-spin. It is good to leave such subjects to that period when we shall have no Heads



to ache, no brains to distort, no faces to lengthen, no clothes to neglect. Had our dear friend attended to this, he might have shewn his airy form in courts and ball rooms, whispered the fair, ogled, sung, danced, and known just as much of those subjects as it is probable he ever knew previous to his death: for I always take it, that a disposition to such sort of enquiries . . . and ends in lunacy and dirty linen. You have my opinions.

Excuse me, in my last note I forgot the black sealing wax, &c: but sorrow, heart-felt sorrow, attends not to punctilios.

['Wierus.' Often cited in Burton's *Anatomy* in the 'Digression of Spirits.']

### 153. TO THE REV. WILLIAM HAZLITT

Temple, 18th February 1808.

SIR,

I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward one or two of his shirts to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Hants [Wilts] (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose Cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that Letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both Painter and Author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very Cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination.

And some words at the back of the said Cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, hey have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

I am, Sir, your humble serv<sup>t</sup>.,

CH. LAMB.

[The Rev. William Hazlitt, Hazlitt's father (1737-1820), was a Unitarian minister at Wem, in Shropshire. Hazlitt's mother was Grace Loftus of Wisbech, a farmer's daughter.

Sarah Stoddart had become engaged to William Hazlitt in the preceding autumn. Her letter containing the drawing referred to had been sent to him at Wem by the Lambs, whereas he, instead of seeking his father's roof as arranged, had sought his betrothed's, and had himself helped in the mystification. The drawing, says W. C. Hazlitt, was a sketch of Middleton Cottage, Miss Stoddart's house at Winterslow.

Concerning the *Tales from Shakespear* Manning had written to Lamb on 7th January 1808, beginning:

Oh Lamb of the India house, that crackest away the best puns in the World, vouchsafe to hear me. What I say will be very short & not less sweet, unless it get spoil'd in a long voyage. Why did not you write to me by the direct fleet? Why did not you send me out your new book—gilt, & adorned with cuts? I take it much amiss.

On 3rd March 1808 Manning had written again, with another request for the *Tales*:

You are the last person I write to, Lamb, by this fleet. I 'm off to-morrow morning, I hope, for the Coast of Cochín China—what I shall do there, I 'll tell you another time. You don't deserve a line from me—why did not you write by the Direct fleet? Why did not you send me your Shakespeare's tales? . . .

The letter that follows probably crossed.]

#### 154. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 26th February 1808.]

DEAR MISSIONARY,

Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her, and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence; but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it may be that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibita et non nisi smugglingis viâ fruenda*. But so it is, in the friendships between wicked men, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. *Splendida vitia* at best. Stay, while I remember it—Mrs. Holcroft was safely delivered of a girl some day in last week. Mother and child doing well. Mr. Holcroft has been attack'd with severe rheumatism. They have moved to Clipstone Street. I suppose you know my farce was damned.

The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. Godwin keeps a shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, he is turned children's bookseller, and sells penny, twopenny, threepenny, and fourpenny books. Sometimes he gets an order for the dearer sort of Books. (Mind, all that I tell you in this letter is true.) A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est Cinna, sed tamen amat.* The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love o' both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws! is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Strygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun; he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book—'The Adventures of Ulysses,' intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! It is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek: I would not mislead you; nor yet from Pope's Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The 'Shakespear Tales' suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespear.' Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have—'Specimens of Ancient English Poets,' 'Specimens of Modern English Poets,' 'Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers,' without end. They used to be called 'Beauties.' You have seen 'Beauties of Shakespear?' so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakespear. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk; and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring something like bears,

mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely: to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with: and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! God be pleased to make the breath stink and the teeth rot out of them all therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cured me of melancholy, as David cured Saul; but I don't throw stones at him, as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. O, that you could go to the new opera of 'Kais' to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervishes, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Sergeant Hill is dead. Mrs. Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children, if he marries Miss Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, 'Hook AND I.' Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, 'Tekeli,' &c. You know what *books and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! 'The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with.' That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the 'Adventurer,' and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. Do you know Watford in Hertfordshire? it is a pretty village. Louisa goes to school there. They say the governess is a very intelligent managing person, takes care of the morals

of the pupils, teaches them something beyond exteriors. Poor Mrs. Beaumont!—Rickman's aunt, she might have been a governess (as both her nieces are) if she had any ability or any education, but I never thought she was good for anything; she is dead and so is her nephew. He was shot in half at Monte Video, that is, not exactly in half, but as you have seen a 3 quarter picture. Stoddart is in England. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Bonaparte has voted 5,000 livres to Davy, the great young English chemist; but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more were attended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick upon them. He a'n't well, that's certain. Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up in a two pair of stairs room at the 'Courier' Office, and receives visitors on his close stool. How is Mr. Ball? He has sent for a prospectus of the London Library.

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution, which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Conlege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear, then, nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Jones of Trinity, I suppose you know he is dead. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening (all great men have public days), to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham (or Betham), a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs. Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite to St. Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all

I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you, while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But, in fulness of affection, we remain yours, C. L.

[Manning had written in April 1807, saying that a roll of silk was on its way to Mary Lamb. It was, however, another letter, not preserved, which mentioned Mr. Knox as the bearer.

'Nox longa.' Horace, *Epistles*, I. 1. 20.

'Res prohibita.' Forbidden things to be enjoyed only by smuggling.

Godwin sold books at 41 Skinner Street under his wife's name—M. J. Godwin. At first when he began, in 1805, in Hanway Street, he had used the name of Thomas Hodgkins, his manager.

'Pauper est.' Adapted from Martial, viii 19

'Damn 'em, how they hissed!' This passage has in it the germ of Lamb's essay in the *Reflector* two or three years later, 'On the Custom of Hissing at the Theatres' (see vol. 1 of my edition).

'Blind mouths.' *Lyidas*, 119.

John Braham (? 1774-1856), the great tenor and the composer of 'The Death of Nelson.' Lamb praised him again in his *Elia* essay 'Imperfect Sympathies,' and later wrote an amusing article on Braham's recantation of Hebraism (see *The Religion of Actors*, vol. 1 of my edition). *Kais*, composed by Braham and Reeve, was produced at Drury Lane, 11th February 1808.

I am reminded that Edward FitzGerald, writing from Woodbridge on 21st March 1878, to his editor, Aldis Wright, says: 'I was looking at Lamb's letter to Manning of 26th February 1808, where he extols Braham, the singer, who (he says) led his Spirit "as the Boys follow Tom the Piper." I had not thought who Tom was: rather acquiesced in some idea of the "pied Piper of Hamelin"; and not half an hour after, chancing to take down Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, found Tom against the Maypole with a ring of Dancers about him. I suppose Tom survived in folk lore—till dear Lamb's time; but how he a Cockney knew of it, I don't know.'

'Old Sergeant Hill.' George Hill (1716-1808), nicknamed Serjeant Labyrinth, the hero of many stories of absence of mind. He would have appealed to Manning on account of his mathematical abilities. He died on 21st February.

'Hook and I.' This pun is attributed also to others, who may very easily have made it independently. Theodore Hook was then only nineteen, but had already written *Tekeli*, a melodrama, and several farces. Talfourd omits the reference to breeches.

'Dr. Hawkesworth.' John Hawkesworth, LL.D. (? 1715-73), the editor of Swift, a director of the East India Company, and the friend of Johnson whom he imitated in the *Adventurer*. He also made one of the translations of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, to which Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses* was to serve as prologue.

James White, Lamb's friend and the author of *Falstaff's Letters*, was for many years a clerk in the Treasurer's office at Christ's Hospital. Later he founded an advertisement agency, which still exists (1935).

'Congreve's repulse.' The story is told by Johnson in the *Lives of the Poets*. Congreve 'disgusted him [Voltaire] by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that, if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him."'

'Davy.' Afterwards Sir Humphry Davy, and now one of Coleridge's correspondents. He had been awarded the Napoleon prize of 3,000 (not 5,000) francs for his discoveries announced in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1807.

Coleridge's lectures. Coleridge delivered the first on 12th January 1808, and the second on 5th February. The third and fourth were eventually delivered some time before 3rd April. The subject was not Taste but Poetry. Coleridge's rooms over the *Courier* office at No. 348 Strand are described by De Quincey in his *Works*, vol. II (1863 edition), page 98.

It was Coleridge's illness that was bringing Wordsworth to town, to be followed by Southey, largely by the instrumentality of Charles and Mary Lamb. It is conjectured that Coleridge was just then more than usually in the power of drugs.

Sir Joseph Banks, as President of the Royal Society, had written a letter to the East India Company supporting Manning's wish to practise as a doctor in Canton.

The similar associations that sprang up in imitation of the Royal Institution have all vanished, except the London Institution in Finsbury Circus.

'Writing like Shakspeare.' This passage was omitted by Talfourd. He seems to have shown it to Crabb Robinson, just after Lamb's death, as one of the things that could not be published. Robinson (or Robinson's editor, Dr. Sadler), in recording the event, substitutes a dash for Wordsworth's name.

Miss Betham was Miss Mary Matilda Betham (1776-1852), afterwards a correspondent of Lamb. She had written a *Biographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country*, 1804, and some poems. Among the sitters were Coleridge and Mrs. Coleridge and, later, Randal Norris. I cannot find that she painted Lamb. The Profilit opposite St. Dunstan's was, I take it, E. Beetham, Patent Washing-Mill Maker at 27 Fleet Street. I find this in the 1808 Directory. The shop was close to Inner Temple Lane.]

## 155. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

March 11, 1808.

DEAR GODWIN,

The giant's vomit was perfectly nauseous, and I am glad you pointed it out. I have removed the objection. To the other passages I can find no other objection but what you may bring to numberless passages besides, such as of Scylla snatching up the six men, etc., that is to say, they are lively images of *shocking* things. If you want a book, which is not occasionally to *shock*, you should not have thought of a tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders. I cannot alter these things without enervating the Book, and I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you and all the London booksellers should refuse it. But speaking as author to author, I must say that I think *the terrible* in those two passages seems to me so much to preponderate over the nauseous, as to make them rather fine than disgusting. Who is to read

them, I don't know: who is it that reads *Tales of Terror and Mysteries of Udolpho*? Such things sell. I only say that I will not consent to alter such passages, which I know to be some of the best in the book. As an author I say to you an author, Touch not my work. As to a bookseller I say, Take the work such as it is, or refuse it. You are as free to refuse it as when we first talked of it. As to a friend I say, Don't plague yourself and me with nonsensical objections. I assure you I will not alter one more word.

[This letter refers to the proofs of Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, his prose paraphrase for children of Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*, which Mrs. Godwin was publishing.

'Tenax propositi': Firm in sticking to your plans. Horace, *Odes*, III. iii. 1.

The *Tales of Terror*, 1801, were by Matthew Gregory Lewis, 'Monk Lewis,' as he was called, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, by Mrs. Radcliffe.

We now come to the first letter to Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867), who was to be so much in the Lambs' lives, and to whose *Diary* we are indebted for much of our information concerning them.]

#### 156. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated at end: 12th March 1808.]

DEAR SIR,

Wordsworth breakfasts with me on Tuesday morning next; he goes to Mrs. Clarkson the next day, and will be glad to meet you before he goes. Can you come to us before nine or at nine that morning? I am afraid, *W.* is so engaged with Coleridge, who is ill, we cannot have him in an evening. If I do not hear from you, I will expect you to breakfast on Tuesday.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Saturday, 12 Mar., 1808.

[Wordsworth left on 3rd April, by which time Coleridge was sufficiently recovered to give two more lectures. The series closed in June. Coleridge then went to Bury St. Edmunds to see the Clarksons and next to Grasmere, to the Wordsworths. His separation from Mrs. Coleridge had already occurred, he and his wife remaining, however, on friendly terms.]



## 157. TO GEORGE DYER

From my Desk in Leadenhall Street.

[No date: Probably 5th July 1808.]

DEAR DYER,

Coleridge is not so bad as your fears have represented him; it is true that he is Bury'd, altho' he is not dead; to understand this quibble you must know that he is at Bury St. Edmunds, relaxing, after the fatigues of lecturing and Londonizing. The little Rickmaness, whom you enquire after so kindly, thrives and grows apace; she is already a prattler, and 'tis thought that on some future day she may be a speaker. We hold our weekly meetings still at No. 16, where altho' we are not so high as the top of Malvern, we are involved in almost as much mist. Miss B[etham]'s merit 'in every point of view,' I am not disposed to question, altho' I have not been indulged with any view of that lady, back, side, or front—*fie!* Dyer, to praise a female in such common market phrases—you who are held so courtly and so attentive. My book is not yet out, that is, not my 'Extracts,' my 'Ulysses' is, and waits your acceptance. When you shall come to town, I hope to present you both together—never think of buying the 'Extracts'—half guinea books were never calculated for my friends. Those poets have started up since your departure; William Hazlitt, your friend and mine, is putting to press a collection of verses, chiefly amatory, some of them pretty enough. How these painters encroach on our province! There's Hoppner, Shee, Westall, and I don't know who besides, and Tresham. It seems on confession, that they are not at the top of their own art, when they seek to eke out their fame with the assistance of another's; no large tea-dealer sells cheese; no great silversmith sells razor-strops; it is only your petty dealers who mix commodities. If Nero had been a great Emperor, he would never have played the Violoncello! Who ever caught you, Dyer, designing a landscape, or taking a likeness? I have no more to add, who am the friend of virtue, poetry, painting, therefore in an especial manner,

Unalterably Thine

C. LAMB.

['No. 16.' Mitre Court Buildings, where Lamb had been established with Mary since 1800. Next year he was to move to 4 Inner Temple Lane.

'My "Extracts."' The *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, mentioned by Lamb in his letter to Manning, page 301. See also the letter to Coleridge, page 314, and note on page 316.

Hazlitt, I think, did not persevere with his intention to publish his poems; but of the artist-authors named, John Hoppner produced in 1805 *Oriental Tales translated into verse*; Sir Martin Archer Shee, in the same year, *Rhymes on*

*Art, or the Remonstrance of a Painter*; Richard Westall wrote and illustrated *A Day in Spring*, 1808, and Henry Tresham, the historical painter, had, up to the time of writing, brought out four volumes of verse.

On 18th August 1808 Manning wrote from Macao:

P.S. You neglect me sadly, Lamb! I have written quires to you; & you are never inquiring after me. Considering the distance, the length of time, &c., there ought to be Realms [? reams] between us. Goodbye. Best love to Mary.]

#### 158. TO SARAH HAZLITT (LATE STODDART)

Saturday.

Dec. 10, 1808.

There came this morning a printed prospectus from S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere, of a weekly paper, to be called *The Friend*—a flaming prospectus—I have no time to give the heads of it—to commence first Saturday in January. There came also a notice of a Turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

C. LAMB.

[Hazlitt and Sarah Stoddart had been married on 1st May 1808. Originally it was intended to perform the ceremony at Winterslow, but London was actually the place: St. Andrew's, Holborn. Mary Lamb was a bridesmaid, and Charles Lamb was present. He told Southey in a letter some years after: 'I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh.'

*The Friend*, which probably had been in Coleridge's thoughts for some time, although announced to begin on the first Saturday in January 1809, did not begin until 1st June.]

#### 159. TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

Dec. 10, 1808.

We have this moment received a very cheerful letter from Coleridge, who is now at Grasmere. It contains a prospectus for a new weekly publication to be called *The Friend*. He says they are well there, and in good spirits & that he has not been so well for a long time.

The Prospectus is of a weekly paper of a miscellaneous nature to be call'd the *Friend* & to come out, the first number, the first Saturday in January. Those who remember *The Watchman* will not be very sanguine in expecting a regular fulfilment of this Prophecy. But C. writes in delightful spirits, & if ever, he may now do this thing. I suppose he will send you a Prospectus. I had some thought of inclosing

mine. But I want to shew it about. My kindest remembrance to Mr. C. & thanks for the turkey.

C. LAMB.

[Coleridge, after delivering his lectures, had gone to Bury on a visit to the Clarksons. He then passed on to Grasmere, to Wordsworth's new house, Allan Bank, and settled down to project the *Friend*.]

## 160. TO GEORGE DAWE

DEAR D.,

[P.M. 21st January 1809.]

I think that I should not find much entertainment in an Anatomical Lecture, therefore if you will excuse me, I will decline your kind offer of a ticket. It would not be convenient for me to go on Monday and I think that it would not amuse me any other night. Therefore I resign my interest in said Ticket or Tickets to some more scientific wight and am (as they say) equally obliged.

C. L.

P.S. When did you see Mrs. Godwin?

Saturday, I don't know what day of January '09.

[The only letter to George Dawe (1781-1820), the portrait-painter and engraver, who later in this year was made an A.R.A., and in 1814 an R.A. After Dawe's death Lamb wrote some amusing reminiscences of him for the *Englishman's Magazine*, September 1831.

The next letter, of which Mary's part has been omitted, except for a scrap at the end, shows us the first glimpse of Charles Lamb's gift of pure nonsense, especially when employed for the use of children.]

## 161. CHARLES AND MARY LAMB TO LOUISA MARTIN

[Dated at end: 28th March 1809.]

Mary is suddenly snatched away (not by death) and has left her letter open, which I am tempted to fill up. Some odd things have occurred since you went away. Dawe the painter has painted a picture of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, which pleased the King so much that he knighted him. He is now Sir George Dawe. Mary has told you about Nurse. I was wishing her to die and how lucky things turn out!

Hazlitt's child died of swallowing a bag of white paint, which the poor little innocent mistook for sugar candy. It told its Mother just two hours before it died, that it did not like soft sugar candy, and so it came out, which was not before suspected. When it was opened several other things were found in it, particularly a small hearth brush, two golden pippins and a letter which I had written to Hazlitt from Bath.

The letter had nothing remarkable in it. Martin Burney has displeased his family by marrying. You know the person, Miss Winter, that used to come for work to our house. It was there they contrived to meet. We suspected nothing.

My brother John said in a public coffee house the other day that his brother Charles (meaning me) had the best heart of anybody he knew. An eminent merchant (in consequence) took it up very warmly and promised his interest at the next election of Governors for Bartholomew Hospital to make me a Governor. Those institutions require humane people to have the Superintendence of them. Why don't you mind your spelling better? In your last letter you spelt finish, finnish, with two n's. When you arn't quite sure of a word write it at full length on three sorts of paper, or as many, as you think it may be spelt, ways, then throw them up the chimney, the smoke will carry them up, and watch on the outside till they come down, and that that's most smoked is the right way of spelling it. They always do so in Wales. But their chimneys are lower.

Your sister Hannah spoke 34750 words in twenty or twenty and one minutes last Saturday. There was a man with me who took them down; an amazing instance of the rapidity and volubility of some people's way of speaking.

[*Mary Lamb adds :*]

He has only left room for me to say I hope it is true that you do not show your friends' nonsensical letters to your Governess.

I have not seen your Mother since the moving day, nor Hannah for several weeks. Sarah seems to succeed admirably.

Let us hear from you soon. Farewell,

I am,

Yours affectionately,

March 28th 1809.

M. LAMB.

['Nurse.' Mary Lamb had written that 'poor nurse fell down and hurt her hip, and was in Westminster Infirmary.

Hazlitt's first child, as it happened, did die; but he was alive when Lamb wrote. Dawe was not knighted. Martin Burney did not marry.

Lamb's 'matter-of-lie' mood continues:]

#### 162. CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

29th March, 1809.

I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote, Holcroft

is dead. He died on Thursday last and is not yet buried. He has been opened by Carlisle and his heart was found completely ossified. He has had a long and severe illness. He seemed very willing to live, and to the last acted on his favorite principle of the power of the will to overcome disease. I believe his strong faith in that power kept him alive long after another person would have given him up, and the physicians all concurred in positively saying he would not live a week, many weeks before he died. The family are as well as can be expected. I told you something about Mrs. Holcroft's plans. Since her death there has been a meeting of his friends and a subscription has been mentioned. I have no doubt that she will be set agoing, and that she will be fully competent to the scheme which she proposes. Fanny bears it much better than I could have supposed. So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again. Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre Court Buildings. We are at 34, South-ampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and shall be here till about the end of May; then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King, if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 2 [4] Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hate Court, with three trees and a pump in it. So you know it? I was born

near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives, of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know in Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examination in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificance! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no convenience of doing it by this. Mrs. — grows every day in disfavour with God and man. I will be buried with this inscription over me:— 'Here lies C. L., the Woman-hater'—I mean that hated ONE WOMAN: for the rest, God bless them, and when he makes any more, make 'em prettier. How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

C. LAMB, &c.

[Thomas Holcroft died on 23rd March 1809, aged sixty-three.

16 Mitre Court Buildings, 27 and 34 Southampton Buildings, and 4 Inner Temple Lane (Lamb's homes) have all been rebuilt since Lamb's day. Where one can still (1934) be sure of being under the same roofs that once covered him is at Colebrook Cottage, Islington, the two Enfield houses, 'Lamb Cottage' at Edmonton, and No. 3 the Grove, Highgate, where he used to visit Coleridge. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, stands, but has been rebuilt.

'That word "moving."' Lamb later elaborated and condensed this passage, in the *Elia* essay 'New Year's Eve': 'Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood.'

'Mrs. Clarke.' Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852), ex-mistress of the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief, whose reception of money from officers as return for procuring them preferment or promising to, by her influence with the duke, had just been exposed in Parliament, and was causing immense excitement.

'Godwin's little book.' Probably the *Essay on Sepulchres*. But Godwin's *Lives of Edward and John Phillips*, Milton's nephews, appeared also at this time.

'Mrs. —.' Most probably Mrs. Godwin once more.

'Not the Sheriff.' Alluding to Sir Richard Phillips, the publisher, who was elected Sheriff of London in 1807, and was knighted in 1808.

At Easter 1809, Robert Lloyd, now a Birmingham bookseller, visited London and wrote to his wife some enthusiastic letters with glimpses of Lamb in them. On the first night he supped with the Lambs at Godwin's. On the next night, a Wednesday, he was at Lamb's, with Rickman, Captain Burney, and George Dyer, supping on cold pork, cheese, and porter. 'Pipes were introduced.' Writing on the next day he says that Lamb was delighted with the *Walton* he gave him. The letter of 3rd April 1809 says: 'I spent yesterday with Lamb and his sister—it is sweetly gratifying to see them. . . . If I may use the expression, their union of affection is what we conceive of marriage in Heaven. They are the World *one* to the *other*. They are writing a book of poetry for children together.' 'It is *task* work to them,' he says in another letter. 'They are writing for money, and a book of poetry for children being likely to do well has induced them to compose one.' On the next day Robert was again to enjoy Lamb's company, which he preferred to the opera. And in the last letter of the series he is to spend the evening again with Lamb, having dined the day before with James White.]

## 163. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R.: May 1809.]

DEAR SIR,

Would you be so kind as, when you go to the Times office, to see about an Advertisement which My Landlady's Daughter left for insertion about ten days since and has not appeared, for a *Governesses Place*? The references are to Thorpe & Graves 18 Lower Holborn, and to M. B. 115 Oxford St. Though not anxious about attitudes, she pines for a situation. I got home tolerably well, as I hear, the other evening. It may be a warning to any one in future to ask me to a dinner party. I always disgrace myself. I floated up stairs on the Coachman's back, like Ariel; 'On a bat's back I do fly, After sunset merrily.'

In sobriety

I am

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Lamb used the simile of Ariel at least twice afterwards: at the close of the *Elia* essay: 'Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming-of-Age,' and in a letter to Dr. Asbury of Enfield, to which we shall come in due course.]

gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpetings. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.

I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasureable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad of the 'Old and Young Courtier;' and in its seizure of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i.e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate 'and wisest Stewart' say No.

I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*,—they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and *seen* so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for 'Lyrical Ballads.' I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters—those pretty comets with swingeing tails.

I'll just crowd in God bless you!

C. LAMB.

Wednesday night.

[The epic about Cain and Abel was *The Wanderings of Cain*, which Coleridge projected but never finished. The drama in which Got-fader performs has been identified with a dialect play by Sebastian Sailer (1714-77) on the creation and fall of Adam and Eve, a transcription of which Coleridge had brought home from Germany. See J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu*, second edition, 1932, pages 604n-r.

'Tis Burton's recipe.' Lamb was just now steeped in the *Anatomy*; but there is no need to see if Burton says this.

'Eliza Buckingham.' Sara Coleridge's message was probably intended for Eliza, a servant at the Buckingham Street lodgings.

'Lambe' was the *Anti-Jacobin's* idea of Lamb's name; and indeed many persons adhered to it at the end. Mrs. Coleridge, when writing to her husband under care of Lamb at the India House, added 'e' to Lamb's name to signify that the letter was for Coleridge. Wordsworth later also had some of his letters addressed in the same way—for the same economical reason.

Coleridge's *Lewti* was reprinted, with alterations, from the *Morning Post*, in the *Annual Anthology*, vol. ii. Line 69 ran:

Had I the enviable power;

Coleridge changed this to:

Voice of the Night! had I the power.



'*This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*; a Poem, addressed to Charles Lamb of the India House, London,' was also in the *Annual Anthology*. Lamb objected to the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' (see above). Lamb says 'five years ago'; he means three. Coleridge did not alter the phrase. It was against this poem that he wrote in pencil on his deathbed in 1834: 'Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart.—S. T. C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797—1834 = 37 years!'

'I have hit off the following,' *A Ballad Denoting the Difference between the Rich and the Poor*, first printed with the Imitations of Burton in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802.

'And wisest Stewart'—Stuart of the *Morning Post*. Adapted from Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*:

But wisest Fate says no.

'W.'s [Wordsworth's] tragedy' was *The Borderers*.  
The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was just ready.]

#### 65. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 9th August 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the new-born infant from star-blasting and moon-blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they pretty regular correspondents, with as much wit as [? and] wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling; as much goodness as will earn heaven if there be such a place and deserve it if there be not, but, rather than go to bed solitary, would truckle with the meanest succubus on her bed of brimstone. Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me. I could *curse* the sheet full; so much stronger is corruption than grace in the Natural Man.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face, by punch-light? O! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence—yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility from Madame Sevigné and Balzac (observe my Larning!) to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife (with a child in her guts) and the young philosopher at Keswick with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary*

*world.* George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse—Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude 'personal satire,' so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell: for dinner is at hand, and yearning guts do chide.

C. L.

[Southey's letters contain a glimpse of Lamb and Manning by punch-light. Writing in 1824, describing a certain expression of Mrs. Coleridge's face, Southey says:

First, then, it was an expression of dolorous alarm, such as Le Brun ought to have painted: but such as Manning never could have equalled, when, while Mrs. Lloyd was keeping her room in child-bed, he and Charles Lamb sate drinking punch in the room below till three in the morning—Manning acting Le Brun's passions (punchified at the time), and Charles Lamb (punchified also) roaring aloud and swearing, while the tears ran down his cheeks, that it required more genius than even Shakespeare possessed to personate them so well; Charles Lloyd the while (not punchified) praying and entreating them to go to bed, and not disturb his wife by the uproar they were making.

'Balzac.' Not, of course, the novelist; but Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654) the letter-writer.

'Do chide.'

The cock doth crow, the day doth daw,  
The channering worm doth chide.

*Old Ballad.*

Replying, on 10th August, Manning says:

If you wish to see my honest face (& tis a very honest face, but I may be a damned rogue for all that for as the learned Author of the Latin Grammar judiciously observeth, 'fronti nulla fides')<sup>1</sup> you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me a particular satisfaction, you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me no cause of dissatisfaction, you must come to Cambridge—Give me a line to-morrow saying that you 'll come yourself on Tuesday, & I 'll prepare a lodging for you—or come without announcing your intention, if you don't chuse to write, & we 'll see what we can do.—I shall be very much disengaged this week—so I shall next—after that I cannot promise.—The very thought of your coming makes my keg of Rum wabble about like a porpoise—and the liquor (how fine it smells!) goes *Gulich squiluck* against the sides for joy.]

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<sup>1</sup> 'There is no trust to be placed in outward looks.'—Juvenal, *Sat.* ii. 8.

## 66. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 11th August 1800.]

My dear fellow (*N.B.* mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of G—d Almighty's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even He can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in 'green retreats' all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aquavitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, if mathematically divided, gives  $1\frac{1}{2}$  for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.

And elsewhere,—

*Twenty-first Sonnet.*

What neat repast shall feast us, light <sup>1</sup> and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine,<sup>2</sup> whence we may rise  
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice  
*Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?*

Indeed, the poets are full of this pleasing morality—

Veni cito, Domine Manning!

Think upon it. Excuse the paper: it is all I have.

*N.B.*—I lives at No. 27 Southampton Buildings, Holborn.

C. LAMB.

## 67. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*Thursday, Aug. 14, 1800.*

Read on and you'll come to the *Pens*.

My head is playing all the tunes in the world, ringing such peals. It has just finished the 'Merry Christ Church Bells,' and absolutely is beginning 'Turn again, Whittington.' Buz, buz, buz: bum, bum, bum: wheeze, wheeze, wheeze: feu, feu, feu: tinky, tinky, tinky: *craunch*. I shall certainly come to be damned at last. I have been getting drunk for two days running. I find my moral sense in the last stage of a consumption, and my religion burning as blue and faint as

<sup>1</sup> We poets generally give *light* dinners.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt the poet here alludes to port wine at 38s. the dozen.

the tops of burning bricks. Hell gapes and the Devil's great guts cry cupboard for me. In the midst of this infernal torture, Conscience (and be damn'd to her) is barking and yelping as loud as any of them.

I have sat down to read over again your satire upon me in the *Anthology* and I think I do begin to spy out something with beauty and design in it. I perfectly accede to all your alterations, and only desire that you had cut deeper, when your hand was in.

In the next edition of the '*Anthology*' (which Phœbus avert and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out *gentle-bearded*, and substitute: drunken dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard *or more delicacy*. Damn you, I was beginning to forgive you and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face *Charles Lamb of the India House*. Now I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You Dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin show-box attributes.

By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one *for you*. Now I do affirm that '*Lewti*' is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. *Therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an '*Anthology*' before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of *Lewti* being out of temper one day. In sober truth, I cannot see any great merit in the little Dialogue called '*Blenheim*.' It is rather novel and pretty; but the thought is very obvious and children's poor prattle, a thing of easy imitation. *Pauper vult videri et EST.*

'*Gaulberto*' certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to '*Lewti*' I like the '*Raven*,' which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of *Anthologies*, I must say I am sorry the old Pastoral way has fallen into disrepute. The

Gentry which now indite Sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's *Miscellanies*. But, miscellanies decaying and the old Pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and hive upon Magazines and Anthologies. This Race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are Idolators and worship the Moon. Others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility, or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number 'encroacheth upon the province of the Elegy'—*vice versa*, whatever 'cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the Epigram.' I have been able to discover but few *Images* in their temples, which, like the Caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *Echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began; or whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the Island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that GEORGE DYER hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of Poetry and Criticism. They impend over the town, and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *bandbill*.) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by

excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O, George, George, with a head uniformly wrong and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes!—then I would call the Gentry of thy native Island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy Prospectus Trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy List of Subscribers. I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. [*Lamb here erases six lines.*]

Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus aptly call 'the affected.' But I am suffering from the combined effect of two days' drunkenness, and at such times it is not very easy to think or express in a natural series. The ONLY useful OBJECT of this Letter is to apprize you that on Saturday I shall transmit the PENS by the same coach I sent the Parcel. So enquire them out. You had better write to Godwin *here*, directing your letter to be forwarded to him. I don't know his address. You know your letter must at any rate come to London first. C. L.

['Your satire upon me.' This *Lime-tree Bower my Prison*, where the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' occurs thrice.

'Those nine other wandering maids.' The Muses. A recollection of the *Anti-Jacobin's* verses on Lamb and his friends (see page 108).

'That scandalous piece of private history.' A reference to Coleridge's *Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, reprinted in the *Annual Antbology* from the *Morning Post*.

'Blenheim.' Southey's ballad, 'It was a summer's evening.'

'Pauper vult videri.' The shortest epigram of Martial, viii. 19, is, 'Pauper videri Cinna vult; et est pauper': It wants to be thought poor: and poor it is.

'Gaulberto.' The poem *St. Gualberto* by Southey, in the *Annual Antbology*.

'The Raven' was referred to in Lamb's letter of 5th February 1797.

George Dyer's *Poems*, in two volumes, were published in 1800.

'The Pens.' Coleridge seems to have depended on his friends for his writing implements. In a letter to Rickman on 14th March 1804 he says: 'The East India House has very politely made me a present thro' Mr. Charles Lamb, an *Eminent* in the Indian service, of a hundred or so of pens,' and he goes on to suggest that the House of Commons might supplement this with a gift of sealing wax.]

## 68. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 21st August 1800.]

I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into

Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things, have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Friend (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely in *rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Friend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and . . . 's brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn,—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscriptum in the blank leaf, running thus, FROM THE AUTHOR! it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world.

N.B.—Dirty books [i.e. backs], smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise.

N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I

find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched most deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.)

So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it?—but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

['Mr. Melmoth.' A translation of the *Letters of Pliny the Younger* was made by William Melmoth in 1746.

Trismegistus—thrice greatest—was the term applied to Hermes, the mythical Egyptian philosopher. Manning had written *An Introduction to Arithmetic and Algebra*, 1796, 1798.

'Meræ nugæ': Sheer nonsense.

'... 's brains.' In a later letter Lamb uses Judge Park's wig, when his head is in it, as a simile for emptiness. The dots are in the original, which is in the Huntington Library.]

## 69. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

August 26th, 1800.

How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.



## HELEN REPENTANT TOO LATE

1

High-born Helen, round your dwelling  
 These twenty years I've paced in vain:  
 Haughty beauty, your lover's duty  
 Has been to glory in his pain.

2

High-born Helen! proudly telling  
 Stories of your cold disdain;  
 I starve, I die, now you comply,  
 And I no longer can complain.

3

These twenty years I've lived on tears,  
 Dwelling for ever on a frown;  
 On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;  
 I perish now you kind are grown.

4

Can I, who loved my Beloved  
 But for the 'scorn was in her eye,'  
 Can I be moved for my Beloved,  
 When she 'returns me sigh for sigh?'

5

In stately pride, by my bed-side,  
 High-born Helen's portrait 's hung;  
 Deaf to my praise; my mournful lays  
 Are nightly to the portrait sung.

6

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,  
 Complaining all night long to her!  
*Helen, grown old, no longer cold,*  
 Said, 'You to all men I prefer.'

Godwin returned from Wicklow the week before last, tho' he did not reach home till the Sunday after. He might much better have spent that time with you.—But you see your invitation would have been too late. He greatly regrets the occasion he mist of visiting you, but he intends to revisit Ireland in the next summer, and then he will certainly take Keswick in his way. I dined with the Heathen on Sunday.

By the way, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone in Cold Bath Prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero & his crew had set off. with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it

would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices. I have just lit upon a most beautiful fiction of hell punishments, by the author of 'Hurlothrumbo,' a mad farce. The inventor imagines that in hell there is a great caldron of hot water, in which a man can scarce hold his finger, and an immense sieve over it, into which the probationary souls are put.

And all the little souls  
Pop through the riddle holes.

Mary's love to Mrs. Coleridge—mine to all.

N.B.—I pays no Postage.—

George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.

George brought a Dr. Anderson to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with Packthread, & boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an Epic Poem by one Wilkie, called the 'Epigoniad,' in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the characters, incidents, &c., are verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 800 [? 8,000] lines, and *be* not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius), but it was a good while ago; and he has dipt into Rowe and Orway, I suppose having found their names in Johnson's *Lives* at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seem'd even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlow, Massinger, and the Worthies of Dodsley's Collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his 'Parallel' in the winter. I find he is

also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle & some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching so deeply* upon poetry, can I forget that I have just received from Cottle a magnificent copy of his *Guinea Epic*. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, & fainted. Mr. Cottle's genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his 'Good morrow to ye; good master Lieut.' Instead of *a man, a woman, a daughter*, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the king, the hero*, he constantly writes, *he the king, he the hero*—two flowers of rhetoric palpably from the 'Joan.' But Mr. Cottle soars a higher pitch: and when he is original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters—My God! what a brain he must have! He puts as many plums in his pudding as my Grandmother used to do; and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into Light, and treading on pure flats of this earth for 23 Books together!

C. L.

[The little epigram was by Mary Lamb. It was printed first in the *John Woodvil* volume in 1802; and again, in a footnote to Lamb's essay, 'Blakesmoor in H—shire,' 1824.

Godwin's return was from his visit to Curran. Coleridge had asked him to break his journey at Keswick.

'Wordsworth's Tragedy.' *The Borderers*.

'Hurlothrumbo.' An opera of 1729, written by Johnson, a dancing master.

'I would write a novel.' Lamb returns to this idea, but he never carried it out. The loss is ours.

One of Dyer's printed criticisms of Shakspeare, in his *Poetics*, some years later might be quoted: 'Shakspeare had the inward clothing of a fine mind; the outward covering of solid reading, of critical observation, and the richest eloquence; and compared with these, what are the trappings of the schools?'

'Cottle's *Guinea Epic*' would be *Alfred, an Epic Poem*, by Joseph Cottle, the publisher.

For Dr. Anderson and William Wilkie see the notes to the next letter.]

## 70. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 28th August 1800.]

George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned

poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcase on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs [? Books] and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters—Shenstone, or the like? It would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his*—Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded *pia mater*; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night—he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me*; for, I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his 'Agricultural Magazine.' The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called 'Epigoniad' by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive seemingly to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer sung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's work. 'It was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it: and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 1400 lines!' I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure.

Pray come on Monday if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully

discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

[‘Bell Letters.’ Alluding to John Bell (1745–1831), the printer and publisher chiefly of the British poets.

Dr. Anderson was James Anderson (1739–1808), the editor, at that time, of *Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous History*, published in monthly parts.

Wilkie was William Wilkie (1721–72), the ‘Scottish Homer,’ whose *Epigoniad* in nine books, based on the fourth book of the *Iliad*, was published in 1757.

Dr. Johnson's strictures were chiefly directed against the odes of Gray, whom he disliked, and who called him ‘Ursa Major.’]

#### 71. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 22nd September 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic for his body to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you must know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y’clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful goldfoils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth, where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstances; he

rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's *Æneid*, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. 'There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir, but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!' This fine genius, without anything to show for it or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name! and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot!

all that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

Avaunt friendship! and all memory of absent friends!

C. LAMB.

['Divine spirit of gravy.' This passage is the first of Lamb's outbursts of gustatory ecstasy, afterwards to become frequent in his writings; while in the letter that follows we find him, although only twenty-five, in his richest mood of comedy.

John Barbour (1316-95), author of *Bruce*; Gavin Douglas (1474-1522), author of two allegories, *The Palace of Honour* and *King Hart*, and translator of the *Æneid*.

72. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 9th, 1800.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle. I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event. He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black. Every thing wore an aspect suitable to the respect due

to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spake till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell. This was Lethe to Cottle, and his poor face wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak. I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph, who till now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, wheeled about, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations. At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and so good. I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha. At that moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians the author was as 9, the brother as 1. I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root, I went to work, and beslabber'd *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults, slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish. Perhaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things*. What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated, and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter incapacity of comprehending that there can be any thing bad in poetry. All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses*. So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I *really* had forgotten a good deal of *Alfred*, I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience. For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Phillips's Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived. To

the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head. I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments. I rather guess that the Brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together. Poor Cottle, I must leave him, after his short dream, to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta news. C. L.

[The Cottles were from Bristol. Amos Simon Cottle, whose chief work was *Icelandic Poetry*, 1797, died at Clifford's Inn, where he was George Dyer's neighbour, on 28th September 1800, aged thirty-two. Joseph, who had been a bookseller at Bristol, retired in 1799 to become an author. His epic of *Alfred* was not published till 1801. His *Early Recollections, chiefly relating to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1837, has much curious matter, but it is very inaccurate.

'Uncle Toby.' In *Tristram Shandy*.

'A candid greyhound.' Probably a confused memory of Hotspur's lines in *1 Henry IV*:

Why, what a candy deal of courtesy  
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!

## 73. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 16th October 1800.]

Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *Feverites*; and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise with the sincerity of *Saint Peter*, and the contrition of *Sinner Peter* if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Camb. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not Libraries, Halls, Colleges, Books, Pictures, Statues?

I wish to God you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which would not have escaped



*your genius*,—a LIVE RATTLESNAKE, 10 feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his damn'd big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his damn'd mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of 'The Farmer's Boy.' I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

[*The Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield, was published in March 1800, and was immensely popular.

Lamb's visit to Cambridge was deferred until 5th January 1801.]

## 74. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 3rd November 1800.]

Ecquid meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What has happened to learned Trismegist?—Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come—are impossibilities nothing—be they abstractions of the intellects or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimum alte pendentes*? Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis really curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time.

I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wisbing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand: a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody: a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry: relishes George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion: *up* to anything, *down* to everything—whatever *sapit bominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me

to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant band*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that anybody ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me,) and a promise of a definite answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene (which is too leisurely for story), and transposing that damn'd soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient, and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c., *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling-bell and death-warrant.

This is all my Lunnon news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge: namely, its being a market-town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition: it was and is, simply, the banks of the Cam or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,

C. LAMB.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the 'Farmer's Boy'—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet-dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick. Dyer knows the shoemaker (a damn'd stupid hound in company); but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends and all combinations.

[The Latin tags at the beginning of the letter are difficult to trace, but they mean:

'*Ecquid meditatatur Archimedes?*': Has Archimedes any plans?

'Impedimenta viarum': Obstructions on the roads.

'Racemi nimium alte pendentes': Branches hanging too high.

Mr. Crisp was Manning's landlord, a barber in St. Mary's Passage, Cambridge. In one letter at least Lamb spells his name Crips—a joke he was fond of.

'Rickman' was John Rickman (1771-1840), already a friend of Southey's, whom he had met at Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Rickman's father lived. A graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, he was at this time living in Southampton Buildings, adjacent to Lamb, and about to become secretary to Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester. Rickman had conducted the *Commercial, Agricultural, and Manufacturer's Magazine*, and he was practically the originator of the census in England.

'A pleasant hand.' It is rather curious that in his letter to Southey, on 30th December 1800, telling of his new acquaintance, Rickman says: 'I have a very pleasant neighbour opposite, C. Lamb.' By opposite he means in Chancery Lane. Southey, who had known Rickman since 1797, would probably have arranged the introduction.

'Wishing time of night.' A variation on Hamlet's 'witching time of night,' III. ii. 406.

'Sapit hominem.' 'Hominem pagina nostra sapit': Smacks of man.—Martial, x. 4.

George Daniel, the antiquary and bookseller, tells us that many years later he took Bloomfield to dine with Lamb at Islington.]

#### 75. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 28th November 1800.]

I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case!) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend) that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will.\* Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess, a bite.

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money and time*. I would be loth to think he meant

Ironic satire sidelong sklentend  
On my poor pursie.—BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old cotonation; if they can talk sensibly and feel properly; I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world—eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers at Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with the many-sins. O City abounding in whores, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!

C. L.

[Charles Lloyd had just settled at Old Brathay, about three miles from Ambleside.

Manning's reply to this letter indicates that Lamb's story of the invitation to stay with Lloyd was a hoax. The first page ended where I have put the asterisk. Manning writes: 'N.B. Your Lake story completely took me in till I got to the 2d page. . . .'

'Beautiful Quakers of Pentonville.' This is almost certainly a reference to Hester Savory, the original of Lamb's poem *Hester*. The whole passage is the first of three eulogies of London in the letters, all very similar. To *The Londoner* we come later.]

## 76. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR SIR,

[No date: ? 4th December 1800.]

I send this speedily after the heels of Cooper (O! the dainty expression) to say that Mary is obliged to stay at home on Sunday to receive a female friend, from whom I am equally glad to escape. So that we shall be by ourselves. I write, because it may make *some* difference in your marketting, &c.

C. L.

Thursday Morning.

I am sorry to put you to the expense of twopence postage. But I calculate thus: if Mary comes she will

eat Beef 2 plates, . . . .	4d.
<i>Batter Pudding</i> 1 do. . . .	2d.
Beer, a pint, . . . .	2d.
Wine, 3 glasses, . . . .	11d. I drink no wine!
Chesnuts, after dinner, . . .	2d.
Tea and supper at moderate calcu- lation, . . . .	9d.
	<hr/> 2s. 6d.
From which deduct . . . .	2d. postage
	<hr/> 2s. 4d.

You are a clear gainer by her not coming.

Thursday Morning.

[If the date be correct, this becomes the first extant letter proper which Lamb sent to the author of *Political Justice*. Godwin was then forty-four years old, and had long been busy upon his tragedy *Antonio*, in which Lamb had been assisting with suggestions.

Cooper was Godwin's servant.]

# 77. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 10th, 1800.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I expected a good deal of pleasure from your company to-morrow, but I am sorry I must beg of you to excuse me. I have been confined ever since I saw you with one of the severest colds I ever experienced, occasioned by being in the night air on Sunday, and on the following day, very foolishly. I am neither in health nor spirits to meet company. I hope and trust I shall get out on Saturday night. You will add to your many favours, by transmitting to me as early as possible as many tickets as conveniently you can spare,—Yours truly,

C. L.

I have been plotting how to abridge the Epilogue. But I cannot see that any lines can be spared, retaining the connection, except these two, which are better out.

Why should I instance, &c.,

The sick man's purpose, &c.,

and then the following line must run thus,

The truth by an example best is shown.

Excuse this *important* postscript.

## 78. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 13th December 1800.]

Don't spill the cream upon this letter.

I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out: I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for God's sake (who would not like to have so pious a *professor's* work *damn'd*) do not mention it—it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack INCIDENT*. It is about promise-breaking—you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,  
Purchased a renter's share at Drury-lane;  
A prudent man in every other matter,  
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter;  
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,  
And has been seldom known to beat his wife;  
But Jack is now grown quite another man,  
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan  
Of each new piece,

And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!  
In at the play-house just at six he pops,  
And never quits it till the curtain drops,  
Is never absent on the *author's night*,  
Knows actresses and actors too—by sight;  
So humble, that with Suett he 'll confer,  
Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;  
Nay, with an author has been known so free,  
He once suggested a catastrophe—  
In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd;  
His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourn'd,  
His customers were dropping off apace,  
And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.

One night his wife began a curtain lecture;  
'My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,  
Take pity on your helpless babes and me,  
Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy—  
Look to your business, leave these *curst* plays,  
And try again your old industrious ways.'

Jack who was always scared at the Gazette,  
And had some bits of skull uninjured yet,

Promised amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,  
'He would not see another play that season—'

Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,  
Was late and early in his shop, ate, slept,  
And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;

No wit, but John the hatter once again—

Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*

His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—

John's *bat, wig, snuff-box*—well she knew his *tricks*—

And Jack decamping at the hour of six,

Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,

Announcing that 'Pizarro' was the play—

'O Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing.'

Quoth Jack, 'Why what the devil storm's a-brewing?

About a harmless play why all this fright?

I'll go and see it if it's but for spite—

Zounds, woman! Nelson's <sup>1</sup> to be there to-night.'

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*,—except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now, I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it (pon honour!) by this day week.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first; it begins thus:—the names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.

Ladies, ye've seen how Guzman's consort died,  
Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,  
When Spanish honour through the world was blown,  
And Spanish beauty for the best was known.<sup>2</sup>

In that romantic, unenlighten'd time,

A *breach of promise* <sup>3</sup> was a sort of crime—

Which of you handsome English ladies here,

But deems the penance bloody and severe?

A whimsical old Saragossa <sup>4</sup> fashion,

That a dead father's dying inclination,

Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,<sup>5</sup>

Unjustly on the sex *we* <sup>6</sup> men exclaim,

Rail at *your* <sup>7</sup> vices,—and commit the same;—

Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,

And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb—

What need we instance here the lover's vow,

The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow? <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself.

<sup>2</sup> Four *easy* lines. <sup>3</sup> For which the *heroine* died. <sup>4</sup> In *Spain*!!

<sup>5</sup> Two *neat* lines. <sup>6</sup> Or *you*. <sup>7</sup> Or *our*, as *they* have altered it. <sup>8</sup> Antithesis.



The truth by few examples best is shown—  
 Instead of many which are better known,  
 Take poor Jack Incident, that 's dead and gone.  
 Jack, &c. &c. &c.

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!!  
 C. L.

['As one Tobin's.' The rehearsals of *Antonio* were attended by Godwin's friend, John Tobin, subsequently author of *The Honeymoon*, in the hope, on account of Godwin's reputation for heterodoxy, of deceiving people as to the real authorship of the play. It was, however, avowed by Godwin on the title-page.

Jack Bannister, the comedian, was a favourite actor of Lamb's. See the *Elia* essay 'On Some of the Old Actors.'

Miss Heard was a daughter of William Heard, the author of *The Snuff-Box*, a feeble comedy. Miss Tidswell, by the irony of fate, had a part in Lamb's own play, *Mr. H.*, six years later.

'I have not read the play.' Not, that is, its final form. Lamb must have read it in earlier versions.

Lamb's letter of 16th December to Manning, relating the humours of the first night, is placed here, before the letter to Godwin dated 14th December, to keep the story of *Antonio* in order.]

#### 79. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 16th, 1800.

We are damned!

Not the facetious epilogue could save us. For, as the editor of the 'Morning Post,' quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his words, their profound sense I am sure I retain,) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. PROFESSOR, thy glories wax dim. . . . Again, the incomparable author of the 'True Briton' declared in his paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O PROFESSOR, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which

indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honoured file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the 'Morning Chronicle' downwards to the 'Porcupine,') with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play—stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with; and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next, which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never answer; Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned*; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart mis-gave thee, that thy assistance might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel: his face was lengthened, and ALL OVER SWEAT; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. 'From every pore of him a perfume fell.' I have seen that man in many situations, and from my soul I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in

this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper; and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

[The Professor was Lamb's name for Godwin.

'Quantum mutatus, etc.' A playful adaptation (which means: 'How changed from that professor who didst win such signal victories in the fields of philosophy!') from Virgil, *Æneid* ii. 274-5:

Quantum mutatus ab illo

Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.

'How changed from that Hector who came back to us decked in the spoils of Achilles!'

The *Porcupine* was Cobbett's paper.

After the play on the Saturday night Lamb and Godwin had supped together, to discuss the situation, and I fancy that the 'specious proposition' with which he humoured the author was a scheme of recasting it for a second attempt. If so, the following undated document was probably the result of Lamb's prompt attack on the script.]

#### 80. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: December 1800.]

*Queries.* Whether the best conclusion would not be a solemn judicial pleading, appointed by the king, before himself in person, of Antonio as proxy for Roderigo, and Guzman for himself—the forms and ordering of it to be highly solemn and grand. For this purpose (allowing it,) the king must be reserved, and not have committed his royal dignity by descending to previous conference with Antonio, but must refer from the beginning to this settlement. He must sit in dignity as a high royal arbiter. Whether this would admit of spiritual interpositions, cardinals, &c.—appeals to the Pope, and haughty rejection of his interposition by Antonio—(this merely by the way).

The pleadings must be conducted by short speeches—replies, taunts, and bitter recriminations by Antonio, in his rough style. In the midst of the undecided cause, may not a messenger break up the proceedings by an account of Roderigo's death (no improbable or far-fetch'd event), and the whole conclude with an affecting and awful invocation of Antonio upon Roderigo's spirit, now no longer dependent upon earthly tribunals or a froward woman's will, &c., &c.

Almanza's daughter is now free, &c.

This might be made *very affecting*. Better nothing follow after; if anything, she must step forward and resolve to take the veil. In this case the whole story of the former nunnery *must* be omitted. But, I think, better leave the final conclusion to the imagination of the spectator. Probably the violence of confining her in a convent is not necessary; Antonio's own castle would be sufficient.

To relieve the former part of the Play, could not some sensible images, some work for the Eye, be introduced? A gallery of Pictures, Almanza's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c.

At all events, with the present want of action, the Play must not extend above four Acts, unless it is quite new modell'd. The proposed alterations might all be effected in a few weeks.

Solemn judicial pleadings always go off well, as in Henry the 8th, Merchant of Venice, and perhaps Othello.

[Lamb, said Kegan Paul, when writing this critical Minute, was so genuinely kind and even affectionate in his criticism that Godwin did not perceive his real disapproval.

Swinburne, writing in the *Athenæum* for 13th May 1876, made an interesting comment upon one of Lamb's suggestions in the foregoing document. It contains, he remarks, 'a singular anticipation of one of the most famous passages in the work of the greatest master of our own age, the scene of the portraits in *Hernani*: "To relieve the former part of the play, could not some sensible images, some work for the eye, be introduced? A gallery of pictures, Alexander's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c."' I know of no coincidence more pleasantly and strangely notable than this between the gentle genius of the loveliest among English essayists and the tragic invention of the loftiest among French poets.'

As it happened, however, any plan for a second trial was withdrawn, as we see from the letter which Lamb wrote to Godwin on the next night.

#### 81. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[14th December 1800.]

DEAR SIR,

Late o' Sunday.

I have performed my office in a slovenly way, but judge for me. I sat down at 6 o'clock, and never left reading (and I read out to Mary) your play till 10. In this sitting I noted down lines as they occurred, exactly as you will read my rough paper. Do not be frightened at the bulk of my remarks, for they are almost all upon single lines, which, put together, do not amount to a hundred, and many of them merely verbal. I had but one object in view, abridgement for compression sake. I have used a dogmatical language (which is truly ludicrous when the trivial nature of my remarks is considered), and, remember, my office

was to hunt out faults. You may fairly abridge one half of them, as a fair deduction for the infirmities of Error, and a single reading, which leaves only fifty objections, most of them merely against words, on no short play. Remember, you constituted me Executioner, and a hangman has been seldom seen to be ashamed of his profession before Master Sheriff. We'll talk of the Beauties (of which I am more than ever sure) when we meet,—Yours truly,

C. L.

I will barely add, as you are on the very point of printing, that in my opinion neither prologue nor epilogue should accompany the play. It can only serve to remind your readers of its fate. *Both* suppose an audience, and, that jest being gone, must convert into burlesque. Nor would I (but therein custom and decorum must be a law) print the actors' names. Some things must be kept out of sight.

I have done, and I have but a few square inches of paper to fill up. I am emboldened by a little jorum of punch (vastly good) to say that *next to one man*, I am the most hurt at our ill success. The breast of Hecuba, where she did suckle Hector, looked not to be more lovely than Marshall's forehead when it spit forth sweat, at Critic-swords contending. I remember two honest lines by Marvel, (whose poems by the way I am just going to possess)

Where every Mower's wholesome heat  
Smells like an Alexander's sweat.

[Accompanying this letter were some textual criticisms which I have not seen beyond the solitary one which Kegan Paul cites in his *Life of Godwin*:

'Envable' is a very bad word. I allude to 'Envable right to bless us.' For instance, Burns, comparing the ills of manhood with the state of infancy, says, 'Oh! enviable early days'; here 'tis good, because the passion lay in comparison. Excuse my insulting your judgment with an illustration. I believe I only wanted to lug in the name of a favourite Bardie, or at most to confirm my own judgment.

Lamb, it will be remembered, had refused to let Coleridge use 'enviable' in *Lewti*. Burns's poem to which Lamb alludes is *Despondency, an Ode*, stanza 5, 'Oh! enviable, early days.'

Godwin's play was published in 1801 without Lamb's epilogue.]

## 82 and 83. TO THOMAS MANNING

[19th December 1800.]

I send you all of Coleridge's letters to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on 'Pride's Cure,' by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly

suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) in statu quo, till I come to claim mine own.

C. LAMB.

*Written on the outside :*

For Mister Manning, Teacher of the Mathematics and the black arts. There is another letter in the inside cover of the book opposite the blank leaf that was.

Mind this goes for a letter. (Acknowledge it *directly*, if only in ten words.)

DEAR MANNING,

(I shall want to hear this comes safe.) I have scratched out a good deal, as you will see. Generally, what I have rejected was either *false* in *feeling*, or a violation of character—mostly of the first sort. I will here just instance in the concluding few lines of the 'Dying Lover's Story,' which completely contradicted his character of *silent* and *unreproachful*. I hesitated a good deal what copy to send you, and at last resolved to send the worst, because you are familiar with it, and can make it out; and a stranger would find so much difficulty in doing it, that it would give him more pain than pleasure.

This is compounded precisely of the two persons' hands you requested it should be.—Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[These were the letters accompanying the copy of *Pride's Cure* (or *John Woodvil*) which Charles and Mary Lamb together made for Manning. He had asked for it, as appears from Letter 78.]

#### 84. TO THOMAS MANNING

*December 27th, 1800.*

At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that 's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and caught up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence; —'Sir, it's of great consequence that the world is not misled!'

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian Travels* for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so few in this age, that He must write poetry? Is *morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morn-

Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,  
 Like bashful youngers in society;  
 To mark the structure of a plant or tree;  
 And all fair things of earth, how fair they be! &c. &c.

I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first [third] line is almost Shakspeare's:—

To have my love to bed & to arise.

*Midsummer Night's Dream* [III. i. 174].

I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:

An eye

That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why.

*Rosamund's Epistle.*

I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to shew you.

An idea for Leviathan:—

Commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan,—'tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being.

'Rosamund' sells well in London, maugre the non-reviewal of it.

I sincerely wish you better health, & better health to Edith. Kind remembrances to her.

C. LAMB.

If you come to town by Ash Wensday [6th February], you will certainly see Lloyd here—I expect him by that time.

My sister Mary was never in better health or spirits than now.

[Writing in June 1799, to Robert Lloyd, Priscilla, his sister, says: 'Lamb would not I think by any means be a person to take up your abode with. He is too much like yourself—he would encourage those feelings which it certainly is your duty to suppress. Your station in life—the duties which are pointed out by that rank in society which you are destined to fill—differ widely from his.' When next we hear of Robert Lloyd he has returned to Birmingham, where his father soon afterwards bought him a partnership in a bookselling and printing business.

'Col. Despard.' I have not found the verses. Colonel Edward Marcus Despard, after a career that began brilliantly, was imprisoned in the spring of 1798, and executed for high treason in 1803.

The rhymed passage from *John Woodvil* is that which is best known. Hazlitt relates that Godwin was so taken with it when he first read it that he asked every one he met to tell him the author and play, and at last applied to Lamb himself.]



## 43. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

*March 15th, 1799.*

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes' criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of 'Joanna' you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on a summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this 'Ruin'd Cottage' to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your 'Hymn to the Penates' in a former volume.

I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison. The next best poem, I think, is the First Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the 'Funeral,' I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*, which had at least as good a title to publication as the 'Witch,' or the 'Sailor's Mother.' You call'd it the 'Last of the Family.' The 'Old Woman of Berkeley' comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert with so little alteration his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line indeed, which conveys the finest death-bed image I ever met with:

The doctor whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said.

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In 'Jaspar,' the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The 'Rose' is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness, and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

'Cousin Margaret,' you know, I like. The allusions to the 'Pilgrim's Progress' are particularly happy, and harmonise tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects; but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for the devil; but who is Apollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called 'The Victory'—

Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend;

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency, of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a 'God send the good ship into harbour,' at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the 'Sailor' is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought; but I do not lay claim to much accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

Pray present my love to Edith.

C. L.

[Southey's little volume was vol. ii of the second edition of his *Poems*, published in 1799. The last of the English Eclogues included in it was *The Ruined Cottage*, slightly altered from the version referred to in Letter 36. The *Hymn to the Penates* brought the first volume of this edition to a close. The first Eclogue was *The Old Mansion House*. *The Old Woman of Berkeley* was called *A Ballad showing how an Old Woman rode double and who rode before her*. It was preceded by a long quotation in Latin from Matthew of Westminster. Matthew of Westminster is the imaginary name given to the unknown authors of a chronicle called *Flores Historiarum*, belonging probably to the fifteenth century. The Parody was *The Surgeon's Warning*, which begins with the two lines that Lamb prints as one:—

The Doctor whisper'd to the Nurse,  
And the Surgeon knew what he said.

*The Rose* was blank verse, addressed to Edith Southey. *Cousin Margaret* was a 'Metrical Letter written from London,' in which there are allusions to Bunyan. The reference to Apollidon is explained by these lines:

The Sylphs should waft us to some goodly isle,  
Like that where whilome old Apollidon  
Built up his blameless spell.]

## 44. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

*March 20th, 1799.*

I am hugely pleased with your 'Spider,' 'your old freemason,' as you call him. The three first stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and Old Quarles, those kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Rob. Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes tenfold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamuels and Zillahs and Madelons. I beg you will send me the 'Holly-tree,' if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened; Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge, less successfully, hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following at unressembling distance Sterne and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our 'poor earth-born companions.' It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could (I am in earnest), to commence a series of these animal poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts come across me;—for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole—People bake moles alive by a slow oven-fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport; then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs

intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c., would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good and useful, full of pleasure and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part. I the other day threw off an extempore epitaph on Ensign Peacock of the 3rd Regt. of the Royal East India Volunteers, who like other boys in this scarlet tainted age was ambitious of playing at soldiers, but dying in the first flash of his valour was at the particular instance of his relations buried with military honours! like any veteran scarr'd or chopt from Blenheim or Ramilies. (He was buried in sash and gorget.)

## MARMOR LOQUITUR

Here lies a Volunteer so fine,  
 Who died of a decline,  
 As you or I may do one day;  
 Reader, think of this, I pray;  
 And I humbly hope you 'll drop a tear  
 For my poor Royal Volunteer.  
 He was as brave as brave could be,  
 Nobody was so brave as he;  
 He would have died in Honor's bed,  
 Only he died at home instead.  
 Well may the Royal Regiment swear,  
 They never had such a Volunteer.  
 But whatsoever they may say,  
 Death is a man that will have his way:  
 Tho' he was but an ensign in this world of pain;  
 In the next we hope he 'll be a captain.  
 And without meaning to make any reflection on his mentals,  
 He begg'd to be buried in regimentals.

Sed hæ sunt lamentabiles nugæ—But 'tis as good as some epitaphs you and I have read together in Christ-Church-yard.

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the

warmest friendship and heartiest sympathy, even for an agony of sympathy expressed both by word and deed, and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, 'that old spider,' could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it. But I have no right to dismiss him from my regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

[Hamuel and Zillah are in Southey's poem *The Rose*.

Peter Pindar (Dr. John Wolcot) has an ode *To a Fly, taken out of a Bowl o Punch*. He also wrote *The Lousiad*.

'Poor earth-born companions.' From Burns's *Lines to a Mouse*, second stanza, line 5.

'Toads are made to fly.' Filliping the toad was an old pastime. A toad was placed on one end of a piece of wood, laid crosswise over a stone. The other end was struck with a beetle (i.e. a mallet), and the toad flew into the air. Falstaff says: 'Fillip me with a three-man beetle.' As to worms and fishermen, the late Mrs. Coe, who as a girl had known Lamb at Widford, told me that he could rarely, if ever, be tempted to join the anglers. Affixing the worm was too much for him. 'Barbarous, barbarous,' he used to say.

'Sed hæ sunt lamentabiles nugæ': But these are sad trifles.

We met Sam Le Grice in the letter of 3rd October 1796. To what escapade Lamb refers I do not know, but as a youth he was addicted to folly. It was Sam Le Grice of whom Leigh Hunt in his *Autobiography* tells the excellent tale that he excused himself to his master for not having performed a task, by the remark that he had a 'lethargy.'

In April of this year Lamb's father died. Charles probably at once moved from 45 Chapel Street to No. 36, where Mary Lamb joined him.]

#### 45. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 31st, 1799.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would

describe the country to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bed-room, the 'judgment of Solomon' composing one pannel, and 'Actæon spying Diana naked' the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy.

I have given your address, and the books you want, to the Arches; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to [?with] their names. I have seen Gebor! Gebor aptly so denominated from Geborish, *quasi* Gibberish. But Gebor hath some lucid intervals. I remember darkly one beautiful simile veiled in uncouth phrases about the youngest daughter of the Ark. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them, but I think I would rather print it whole. Have you seen it, or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

I must get to business, so farewell. My kind remembrances to Edith.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb had probably been staying at Widford. Many years later he described in more than one essay his Hertfordshire days (see the *Elia* essays 'Mackery End' and 'Blakesmoor in H—shire' and 'Dream-Children'). The old house was, of course, Blakesware. The wilderness, which lay at the back of the house, is, with Widford, mentioned in *Rosamund Gray*.

The Arches were the brothers Arch, the booksellers of Ludgate Hill.

Gebor stands for *Gebir*, Landor's poem, published in 1798. The simile in question would be this, from Book VII, lines 248-51:

Never so eager, when the world was waves,  
 Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried  
 (Innocent this temptation) to recall  
 With folded vest and casting arm the dove.

The reference to Southey's *Anthology* is to vol. ii, then in preparation. *John Woodvil* was now finished: it circulated in manuscript before being published in 1802.]

## 46. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec., 1799.

DEAR MANNING,

The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

. Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which must else soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had? I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship as an earnest of its after gifts.

I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outset, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am, yours most sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[This is the first letter in the correspondence between Lamb and Manning. Lamb had met Manning at Cambridge late in 1799, when on a visit to Charles Lloyd. Much of Manning's history will be unfolded as the letters proceed, but here it should be stated that he was born on 8th November 1772, and was thus a little more than two years older than Lamb. He was at this time acting as private tutor in mathematics at Cambridge, among his pupils being Charles Lloyd, of Caius, Manning's own college. Manning, however, did not take his degree, owing to an objection to oaths and tests.

Lamb's reference to the beginning of the century shows that he shared with many other non-mathematically-minded persons the belief that the century begins with the hundredth, and not the hundred and first, year. He says of Manning, in the *Elia* essay 'The Old and the New Schoolmaster': 'My friend M., with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second.'

In his reply to this letter, printed in *The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb*, edited by Mrs. Anderson, 1925, Manning says:

I had some conversation the other day with Sophia concerning your Tragedy; & she made some very sensible observations (as I thought) with respect to the unfitness of its title [*Pride's Cure*]. The Folly, whose consequences humble the Pride & ambition of John's heart, does not originate in the working of *those* passions, but from an underpart in his character, & as it were accidentally, viz. from the ebullitions of a drunken mind & from a

rash confidence. You will understand what I mean, without my explaining myself any further. God bless You,—& keep you from all evil things, that walk upon the face of the Earth—I mean Night-mares, Hobgoblins, & Spectres.]

## 47. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 28th, 1799.

DEAR MANNING,

Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company with your thousand faces running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsicord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript, not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry.

Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications.

But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too, so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

By the bye, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*. Allowing your objection (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it—I know you read these *practical divines*). But allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his father's secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine and a full heart, and a proud over-stepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—'as trust in the matter of secrets all ties of blood, &c., &c., keeping of promises, the feeble mind's religion, binding our morning knowledge to the performance of what last night's ignorance spake'—does he not prate, that '*Great Spirits*' must do more than die for their



friend—does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great?

This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him,—perhaps he has been at Cambridge. I dined with him in town and breakfasted with him and Priscilla, who you may tell Charles has promised to come and see me when she returns [to] Clapham. I will write to Charles on Monday.

Need I turn over to blot a fresh clean half-sheet? merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning, Your sincere friend,

C. LAMB.

What is your *proper address*?

[‘Betty Foy’s own Johnny’—*The Idiot Boy* in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

In the postscript. A reference to some drawings of queer beasts in Manning’s previous letter.

Lamb refers in this letter particularly to Act III of his play.

‘I have not seen Coleridge since.’ Since when is not clear.

The italics in the postscript are explained by Lamb’s superscription: ‘Mr. Thomas Manning, near St. Mary’s Church, Cambridge.’

This letter contains the first reference to Coleridge as once more an intimate friend. Coleridge, having returned from Germany, was in London, busy with his translation of Schiller’s *Wallenstein*, one of the songs in which Lamb lyricized for him from a prose version.]

#### 48. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

? Jan. 23, 1800.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the ‘Morning Post,’ are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science, in your yesterday’s dissertation on Mr. Wyndham’s unhappy composition. It must have been the death-blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word ‘also,’ which it seems did not know its place.

I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night—will you fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sara and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid if I did not at intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget, the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

Farewell.

C. L.

[The first letter that has been preserved of the second period of Lamb's correspondence with Coleridge, which was to last intermittently until the end.

In the *Morning Post* of 7th January 1800, had appeared the correspondence between Buonaparte and Lord Grenville, in which Buonaparte made an offer of peace. Lord Grenville's Note, it was pointed out in the *Morning Post* for 16th January, was really written by William Windham, Secretary for War, and on 22nd January appeared an article closely criticizing its grammar.

Windham was destined to be attacked by another stalwart in Lamb's circle, for it was his speech in opposition to Lord Erskine's Cruelty to Animals Bill in 1809 that inspired John Lamb to write his fierce pamphlet (see later).

'Cottrellian grace.' The Cottrells were Masters of the Ceremonies from 1641 to 1808.

The Philosopher was David Hartley Coleridge, aged three, so called after his great namesake, David Hartley. The Coleridges were now, as we have seen, living at 21 Buckingham Street, Strand.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Manning stayed three days at Lamb's & then apparently at 25 Cecil Street, Strand: to which address Sophia Lloyd wrote to him on 26th January & Charles Lloyd on the 29th. They took care of Manning's dog Presto during his absence. Manning was evidently dazzled by Coleridge on their first meeting, as can be gathered by Sophia's letter, which was a reply to one from Manning.'

In the next letter we come upon further indiscretions of Charles Lloyd; which might well be forgotten, but I do not feel entitled to omit any of the correspondence.

Mary Hayes, or Hays, was a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, and also of Southey and Coleridge.]

#### 49. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 8th February 1800.

Saturday.

The Turkey is just come—the largest I ever saw—

Lloyd's letter to Miss Hays I look upon to be a most curious specimen of the apologetic style. How a man could write such a letter to a woman, and dream that there was in it any tendency to sooth or conciliate, from no analogous operations in my own wrong Brain can I explain.—'Mary Hays, I said that I believed that you were in love with me.'—'I had heard several times repeated, that you had loved both Godwin and Friend, moreover I had heard several times repeated, that

all your first novel was but a transcript of letters sent by yourself to the latter Gentleman. I have been told this so often, that it seems to my mind like a general report. I have heard it in all places.' 'Dr. Reid & I were laughing in the wantonness in which our sex too often indulges at the consequence of your theories, & I most wickedly'—(In God's name, how came he & the Dr. so graciously familiar, just after he had discover'd the Dr's complete worthlessness & wickedness?—) 'I most *wickedly* exprest myself as if I thought you would in conduct demonstrate all that you proposed in speculation! I did not say this grossly' (Wheugh! Wheugh! What a delicate invention, how to call a woman a whore, and not be indictable in the Spiritual courts!—) 'In the confounding medley of ordinary conversation, I have interwoven my abhorrence of your principles with a glanced contempt for your personal character. "But," in spite of all these inconsistencies I am your friend, & for the future, if we maintain our intercourse, will prove to you by conduct, how severely I condemn the past.' . . . C. Lloyd must have a damned 'spite to inconsistencies,' if he can reconcile this language to the ordinary meaning of the term apology. . . . Now, Manning, seriously what do you think of this letter? does it appear that Coleridge has added one jot to what Miss Hays might fairly represent from Lloyd's own confession?—You doubt, whether Southey ever exprest himself so strongly on this subject. I suppose you refer to Coleridge's account of him. I can tell you, that Southey did express himself in very harsh terms of Lloyd's conduct, when he was last in town. He came fresh from Miss Hays, who had given him all the story, as I find she tells everybody! and told Southey that she despised Lloyd. I am not sure, that Southey was not in a humour, after this representation, to say all that Coleridge declared he did say. Particularly, if he saw this Letter, which I believe he did. Now, do not imagine, that Col. has prejudiced my mind in this *at all*,—the truth is, I write from my own single judgment, and when I shewed the Letter to Coleridge, he read it in silence, or only once muttered the word 'indelicate.' But I should not have been easy in concealing my true sentiment from you. My whole moral sense is up in arms against the Letter. To my apprehension, it is shockingly & nauseously indelicate, and I perceive an aggravation or multiplication of the Indelicacy, in Lloyd's getting his sister Olivia to transcribe it. An ignorant Quaker girl, I mean ignorant in the best sense, who ought not to know, that such a thing was possible or in *rerum natura*, that a woman should court a man. . . . And a dear sister, who least of all should apprehend such an omen! realiz'd in her own Brother. Manning, do not misapprehend me, I would not say so much to Lloyd's own self, for this plain

reason, that I should [not] be able to convince him, and I would not [cause] unnecessary pain—Yet as much of this, as your discretion & tenderness will give leave, you have my full leave to shew him. . . . But I COULD not let you remain ignorant of so big a part of my nature, as now rises up against this illjudged Letter, particularly as I am doubtful, whether you may not see it in a quite different light. . . . So much for Lloyd's amours with Mary Hays, which would not form an unentertaining romance. From this time, they are no concern of mine. I will sum up the controversy in the words of Coleridge, all he has since said to me, 'Miss Hayes has acted like a fool, & Charles Lloyd not very wisely.'—

I cannot but smile at Lloyd's beginning to find out, that Col. can tell lies. He brings a serious charge against him—that he told Caldwell he had no engagements with the Newspapers! As long as Lloyd or I have known Col. so long have we known him in the daily & hourly habit of quizzing the world by lies, most unaccountable & most disinterested fictions. With a correct knowledge of these inaccuracies on both sides, I am still desirous of keeping on kind terms with Lloyd, and I am to sup with Coleridge tonight—Godwin will be there, whom I am rather curious to see—& Col. to partake with me of Manning's Bounty tomorrow. By the way, I am anxious to get specimens of all English Turkeys. Pray, send me at your Leisure separate Specimens from every County in Great Britain, including Wales, as I hate nationalities. The Irish Turkeys I will let alone, till the Union is determined.—To sum up my inferences from the above facts, I am determined to live a merry Life in the midst of Sinners. I try to consider all men as such, and to pitch my expectations from human nature as low as possible. In this view, all unexpected virtues are God-sends & beautiful exceptions. Only let young Love beware, when he sets out in his progress thro' Life, how he forms erroneous conceptions of finding all saints! To conclude, the Blessing of St. Peter's master rest upon you & all honest anglers.

C. LAMB.

Coleridge has conceived a most high (Quære if just) opinion of you, most illustrious Archimedes. Philosopher Godwin dines with me on your Turkey this day.—I expect the roof to fall & crush the Atheist. I have been drunk two nights running at Coleridge's—how my Head burns!

[For fuller particulars about Mary Hays the reader is referred to *Love Letters of Mary Hays*, by A. F. Wedd, 1925.

William Frend (1757–1841), the mathematician and Unitarian, who had

been prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court at Cambridge for a tract entitled *Peace and Union Recommended to the Associated Bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans*, in which he attacked much of the liturgy of the Church of England. He was found guilty and banished from the university of Cambridge. He had been a friend of Robert Robinson, whose life Dyer wrote, and remained a friend of Dyer to the end of his life. Coleridge had been among the undergraduates who applauded Frend at his trial.

Caldwell was a fellow undergraduate of S. T. C.'s at Jesus College. He was afterwards the Rev. George Caldwell, Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College, and his name is on the list of subscribers to the *Friend*.

The postscript would seem to have been written on the following day, Godwin having made such a good impression on Lamb at Coleridge's as to be invited at once to dinner. Henceforward for several years he was one of the circle.]

#### 50. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 13th February 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

Olivia is a good girl, and if you turn to my letter, you will find that this very plea you set up to vindicate Lloyd I had made use of as a reason why he should never have employed Olivia to make a copy of such a letter—a letter I could not have sent to my enemy's bitch, if she had thought fit to seek me in the way of marriage. But you see it in one view, I in another. Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets and some property properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Corydon and fair Amaryllis, for Charles Lloyd and Mary Hayes, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, 'In what cases and how far sincerity is a virtue?' I do not mean Truth—a good Olivia-like creature—God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would his ears into your face uncalled for. But I despair of doing anything by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, decent man, nothing very brilliant about him, or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-Jacobin Christians imagine

him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you. A middle-sized man, both in stature and in understanding; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

I begin to think you Atheists not quite so tall a species. Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the Pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right hand, and the goats the left. Stripped of its allegory, you must know, the sheep are *I* and the Apostles, and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c., &c.; the goats are the Atheists and the Adulterers, and dumb dogs, and Godwin and M . . . . g, and that Thyestæan crew—yaw! how my saintship sickens at the idea!

You shall have my play and the Falstaff letters in a day or two. I will write to Lloyd by this day's post.

Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd? for really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling*; and believe me, seriously and deeply,

Your well-wisher and friend,

C. L.

['My enemy's bitch.' See *King Lear*, Act IV, scene vii.

Bishop Horsley (then of Rochester, afterwards St. Asaph's) was probably included ironically on account of his hostility to Priestley.

Manning did not reply to this letter until 9th March, when he answered two at once. Here are the salient passages, in one of which Coleridge's occasional veracity is vindicated:

Upon looking back to your Penultimate letter I find the following Query—'Pray is it a part of your sincerity to shew my letters to Lloyd?' To which I answer, 'No.' I shewed *that former* letter of yours to him, *because* anything, that might, per se, appear harsh, is corrected by the statement of the reason why you would not write so freely to him on that subject; yea better corrected & qualified than any extract wou'd have been by comments of *mine*. Your last letter I did not shew him, altho it concerned himself—I thought he would neither see the beauty of, nor be *exactly* pleased with the sentence (which upon my soul I think exquisite) 'A letter I would not have sent to my Enemy's Bitch, if she had thought proper to seek me in the way of marriage.'—I expect you to see, from this example, without my saying anything further, that you may write most freely to me.—One thing, tho', I must beg of you—that is, not to call me Atheist in your letters—for tho' it be mere railery in *you*, & not meant as a serious imputation on my Faith, yet, if the Catholic or any other intolerant religion should [happen] to become established in England, (which spite of the Bishop of R——r, may be the case) & if the Post-people should happen to open & read your letters (which,

considering the sometimes quaintness of their form, they may possibly be incited to do) such names might send me to Smithfield on a hurdle,—& nothing, *upon earth*, is more discordant to my wishes, than to become one of the Smithfield Illuminati.

You recollect, I suppose, the story about Coleridge's humming Caldwell of Jesus College concerning his newspaper engagements—well, it is turned out to be all a mistake—Caldwell has never imputed any such declaration to Coleridge—'twould waste both your time & my own to explain such nonsense.—]

# 51. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 1st March 1800.]

I hope by this time you are prepared to say the 'Falstaff's letters' are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private, I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War and Nature and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessities, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of Luxuries; Bread, and Beer, and Coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Sièyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading Burnet's Own Times. Did you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when his 'old cap was new.' Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives, but all the stark wickedness, that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age and out-lived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually *in alto relievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party men. None of the Damned philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the damned Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite. None of Mr. Robertson's periods with three

members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind—I can make the revolution present to me; the French Revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this damn'd subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakespeare.

My love to Lloyd and Sophia.

C. L.

[Addressed to Mr. Thomas Manning, Mr. Crisp's, near St. Mary's Church, Cambridge.

'War and Nature and Mr. Pitt.' The war had sent up taxation to an almost unbearable height. Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as Prime Minister.

Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson were among the books which, in the *Elia* essay 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading,' Lamb described as *biblia a-biblia*. William Roscoe's principal work was his *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, 1795.]

## 52. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 17th March 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which I hope will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up! what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me for a first plan the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken



up with one thing or other, that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you.

My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

They are my oldest friends; but ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings!

God bless you all three! I would hear from Lloyd, if I could.

C. L.

Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack! we shall be all too rich.

Tell Charles I have seen his Mamma, and ham almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete Matron-Lady-Quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and *thinner* than she was—

But I have not time to fall in love.

Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health!

Huzza! Boys,

and down with the Atheists.

[Coleridge, having sent his wife and Hartley into the country, had, for a while, taken up his abode with Lamb at 45 Chapel Street, Pentonville, and given up the *Morning Post* in order to proceed with his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*. Lamb's forgery of Burton, together with those mentioned in the next letter, which were never printed by Stuart, for whom they were written, was included in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802, among the 'Curious Fragments, extracted from a commonplace book, which belonged to Robert Burton, the famous Author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.']

'They are my oldest friends.' Coleridge and Southey were, of course, older. The ballad I have not found.

'Ham almost fallen in love with her.' Lamb's spelling.]

### 53. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 5th April 1800.]

C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the north, on a visit to his god Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the '*Morning Post*,' all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little

sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lamp-black, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Damn virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose.

I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to lug in from time to time to make 'em popular. Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known; else I had done 'em pretty well.

I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a conceit of 'Diabolic Possession.' Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. He is a good fellow, with the best heart, but his feelings are shockingly *unsane*. Priscilla meditates going to see Pizarro at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's) under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu! tempora! heu! mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.—Yours as usual.

C. L.

[For Coleridge's movements see note to Letter No. 55. *Pizarro* was Sheridan's drama. It was acted this season, 1799-1800, sixty-seven times.

Daniel Stuart became proprietor of the *Morning Post* in 1795, retaining it until 1803. He bought the *Courier* in 1796. In the essay, 'Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago,' written in 1831, Lamb calls him 'one of the finest tempered of editors.']

#### 54. TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date: April 1800.]

I don't know whether you ever dipt into Burton's *Anatomy*. His manner is to shroud and carry off his feelings under a cloud of learned words. He has written but one Poem, which is prefix'd to his *Anatomy*, and called *The Abstract of Melancholy*. Most likely you have seen it.

It is in the last edition of the *Elegant Extracts*. It begins: 'When I go musing all alone, Thinking of divers things foredone.'—So that I have collected my imitation rather from his prose Book, than any Poetry. I call it

▲ CONCEPT OF DIABOLICAL POSSESSION

By myself walking,  
 To myself talking,  
 While as I ruminate  
 On my untoward fate,  
 Scarcely seem I  
 Alone sufficiently;  
 Black thoughts continually  
 Crowding my privacy,  
 They come unbidden,  
 Like foes at a wedding,  
 Thrusting their faces  
 In better guests' places,  
 Peevish and malcontent  
 Clownish impertinents,  
 Dashing the merriments;—  
 So in like fashion  
 Dim cogitations  
 Follow & haunt me,  
 Striving to daunt me,  
 In my heart festering,  
 In my ears whispering,  
 'Thy friends are treacherous,  
 Thy foes are dangerous,  
 Thy dreams ominous'  
 Fierce Anthropophagi,  
 Spectra, Diaboli,  
 What scared Saint Anthony,  
 Shapes undefined,  
 With my fears twined,  
 Hobgoblin, Lemures,  
 Dreams of antipodes,  
 Night-riding Incubi,  
 Troubling the fantasy,  
 All dim illusions,  
 Causing confusions,  
 Figments heretical,  
 Scruples fantastical  
 Doubts diabolical,  
 Abaddon vexeth me,  
 Mahu <sup>1</sup> perplexeth me,  
 Lucifer teareth me, . . .  
 Jesu Mariæ, libera nos ab  
 his tentationibus, orat, implorat,  
 R. Burton Peccator.—

---

<sup>1</sup> The name of a Great Devil.

The clouds are blackning, the storms threatning,  
 And ever the forest maketh a moan,  
 Billows are breaking, the Damsel's heart aching,  
 Thus by herself she singeth alone  
 Weeping right plenteously:  
 'The world is empty, the heart is dead surely,  
 In this world plainly all seemeth amiss,  
 To thy breast, Holy one, take now thy little one,  
 I have had earnest of all earth's bliss,  
 Living right lovingly——'

The manner in both is so antique, that I should despair of many folks liking them.—

You may *perhaps* never have met with Percy's Relicks of ancient English Poetry; if you have, and are acquainted with the following Poem, no harm is done;—if not, I send you a treat, that's all——

EDWARD, EDWARD

(I change my mind, I will give it you in its old own Scottish shape.  
 . . . The rimes else will be lost.)

[*The well-known ballad is enclosed.*]

! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

By which I mean to say, that Edward, Edward, is the very first dramatic poem in the English Language. . . . If you deny that, I'll make you eat your words.

C. LAMB.

[This letter was probably written a few days after the one of 5th April, as in that Lamb promises to send his *Diabolical Possession*. Unfortunately Manning's letters for this period are missing, otherwise the dating of this and the succeeding letters would be much simpler.]

55. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: Probably 16th or 17th April 1800.]

I send you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon 'Realities.' We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin

things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benje, or Benjey—I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. 'The rogue has given me potions to make me love him.' Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pair of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benje broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from D'Israeli, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ; but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way by the severity of his critical strictures in his 'Lives of the Poets.' I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured 'it was certainly the case.' Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss Benjey's friends, has found fault with one of Miss

More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself—in the opinion of Miss Benjey, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of 'Pizarro,' and Miss Benjey or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim*; which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

Our loves and respects to your host and hostess. Our dearest love to Coleridge.

Take no thought about your proof-sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written.

C. LAMB, *Umbra*.

Land of Shadows,  
Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800.

Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of 'Christabel.' It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

And the spring comes slowly up this way;

and the intermediate lines between—

The lady leaps up suddenly,  
The lovely Lady Christabel;

and the lines,—

She folded her arms beneath her cloak,  
And stole to the other side of the oak.

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great*! A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was

very friendly. Kept u up till midnight. Drank punch, and talked about you. He seems, above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen—'or is he a shadow?' If I do not write, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal; but it means no mischief.

I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

C. L.

Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am *homo unius linguæ*: in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.

[Having left Lamb, Coleridge went to Grasmere, where he stayed at Dove Cottage with Wordsworth and finished his translation, which was ready for the printer on 22nd April. To what Lamb alludes in his reference to the homily on 'Realities' I cannot say, but presumably Coleridge had written a metaphysical letter on this subject. Lamb returns to the matter at the end of the first part of his reply.]

Miss Wesley was Sarah Wesley (1760-1828), the daughter of Charles Wesley and, therefore, niece of the great John and Samuel. She moved much in literary society. Miss Benje, or Benjey, was in reality Elizabeth Ogilvy Benger (1778-1827), a friend of Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Barbauld and the Aikins, and other literary people. Madame de Stael called her the most interesting woman she had met in England. She wrote novels and poems and biographies, and was shortly to be worshipped by George Dyer, but to give him no encouragement. In those days there were two East Streets, one leading from Red Lion Square to Lamb's Conduit Street, and one in the neighbourhood of Clare Market.

D'Israeli was Isaac D'Israeli, the author of *Curiosities of Literature* and other books about books and authors; Miss More was Hannah More, and her book, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799; Dr. Gregory was the author of *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*; Miss Seward was Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield; and the Miss Porters were Jane and Anna Maria, authors (later) respectively of *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and *The Hungarian Brothers*.

The proof-sheets were those of *Wallenstein*. Henry Sampson Woodfall was the famous printer of the *Letters of Junius*.

*Christabel*, Coleridge's poem, had been begun in 1797; it was finished, in so far as it was finished, later in the year 1800. It was published first in 1816.

'*Homo unius linguæ*.' Lamb exaggerated here. He had much Latin, more than a little Greek, and apparently a little French. The sentence is in the manner of Burton, whom Lamb had been imitating.

The sentence about Godwin is a little confusing. 'Called upon us since you left' is probably the full sense, for we know that he had dined with Lamb earlier in the year, and Coleridge had written to him as 'at Mr. Lamb's, March 3, 1800.'

The phrase 'long postage' refers to the cost of letters between London and Grasmere.]

## 56. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*Monday, May 12th, 1800.*

MY DEAR COLERIDGE

I don't know why I write, except from the propensity misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness; Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again; but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. Excuse my troubling you; but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change and the stillness. But I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead.—God bless you! Love to Sara and Hartley.

C. LAMB.

[Hetty was the Lambs' aged servant, and this was Mary Lamb's first serious attack, a malady that was to become habitual, since her father's death.]

## 57. TO THOMAS MANNING

*May 17, 1800.*

DEAR MANNING,

I am quite out of spirits, and feel as if I should never recover them. But why should not this pass away? I am foolish, but judge of me by my situation. Our servant is dead, and my sister is ill—so ill as to make a removal to a place of confinement absolutely necessary. I have been left *alone* in a house where but ten days since living beings were, and noises of life were heard. I have made the experiment and find I cannot bear it any longer. Last night I went to sleep at White's, with whom I am to be until I can find a settlement. I have given up my house, and must look out for lodgings. I expect Mary will get better before many weeks are gone,—but at present I feel my daily and hourly



prop has fallen from me. I totter and stagger with weakness, for nobody can supply her place to me. White has *all kindness*, but not *sympathy*. R. Lloyd, my only correspondent, you except, is a good Being, but a weak one. I know not where to look but to you. If you will suffer me to weary your shoulders with part of my Burthen, I shall write again to let you know how I go on. Meantime a letter from you would be a considerable relief to me.—Believe me, yours most sincerely,

C. L.

[White is the author of *Falstaff's Letters*.]

### 58. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 20th May 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at midsummer, by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently . . . only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure.—Farewell.

C. LAMB.

[Manning's letter containing the choice poetry has not been preserved.

The friend in town was John Mathew Gutch (1776–1861), with whom Lamb had been at school at Christ's Hospital, who was now a law stationer, in partnership with one Anderson, at 27 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, since demolished.]

59. TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date: *Early June 1800.*]

DEAR MANNING,

I am a letter in your debt, but I am scarcely rich enough (in spirits) to pay you.—I am writing at an inn on the Ware road, in the neighbourhood of which I am going to pass two days, being Whitsuntide.—Excuse the pen, tis the best I can get.—Poor Mary is very bad yet. I went yesterday hoping I should see her getting well, then I might have come into the country more chearful, but I could not get to see her. This has been a sad damp. Indeed I never in my life have been more wretched than I was all day yesterday. I am glad I am going away from business for a little while, for my head has been hot and ill. I shall be very much alone where I am going, which always revives me. I hope you will accept of this worthless memento, which I merely send as a token that I am in your debt. I will write upon my return, on Thursday at farthest. I return on Wednesday.—

God bless you.

I was afraid you would think me forgetful, and that made me scribble this jumble.

Sunday.

60. TO THOMAS MANNING

[*8th June 1800.*]

DEAR MANNING,

I have been passing three or four quiet days in Hertfordshire which have done my spirits a world of good. On my return I found my sister perfectly recovered. She is to join me next Sunday. So soon hath this terrifying tempest passed over. I am ashamed I ever troubled you with the story. I am sitting in minutely expectation of a friend's coming to Tea.—I will hastily transcribe a little Poem, which I wrote for Burton.—

The Case plainly stated between  
a rich noble's Palace & a poor Workhouse—

THE ARGUMENT

In a costly palace youth meets respect.  
In a wretched workhouse age finds neglect.

Evidenced [? evinced] thus

I

In a costly palace youth goes clad in gold;  
In a wretched workhouse age's limbs are cold,  
There they sit, the old men, by a shivering fire,  
Still close & closer cowering, warmth is their desire.

2

In a costly palace when the brave gallants dine,  
They have store of good venison with old Canary wine,  
With singing and music to heighten the Cheer;  
Coarse bits with grudging are the Pauper's best fare.

3

In a costly palace youth is still carest  
By a train of attendants which laugh at my young lord's jest;  
In a wretched workhouse the contrary prevails,  
When age begins to prattle, no man hark'neth to his tales.

4

In a costly palace if the child with a pin  
Do but chance to prick a finger, strait the Doctor is called in;  
In a wretched workhouse men are left to perish  
For want of proper cordials which their old age might cherish.

5

In a costly palace youth enjoys his Lust,  
In a wretched workhouse Age, in corners thrust,  
Thinks upon the former days when he was well to do,  
Had children to stand by him, both friends & kindness too.

6

In a costly palace youth his temples hides  
With a new devised Peruke that reaches to his sides;  
In a wretched workhouse Age's crown is bare,  
With a few thin locks just to fence out the cold air.

7

In peace as in war tis our young gallants' pride  
To walk each one the streets with a rapier at his side,  
That none to do them injury may have pretence;  
Wretched Age in Poverty must brook offence—

#### THE CONSEQUENCE

Wanton youth is oft-times haught and swelling found,  
When Age for very shame goes stooping to the ground—<sup>1</sup>

You see I have followed the old writers, whose way was to take the  
*Extremes of either State & make a fair Comparison—*

Sunday.

I wish you to like it—

I think it my *chef du ver*—

how do ye spell it?

C. L.

[For the little poem see note on page 146.]

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson's addition: THE CONCLUSION—*Dura Paupertas!*—E. V. L.

## 61. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: ? 28th July 1800.]

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch (you must remember him? at Christ's—you saw him, slightly, one day with Thomson at our house)—to come and lodge with him at his house in Southampton Buildings, Chancery-Lane. This was a very comfortable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable rent, and including the use of an old servant, besides being infinitely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you must perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the perpetual liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, probably to the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very generous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (including servant) under £34 a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford on a visit, which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of the Bodleian Library and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop Taylor at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. [Two lines erased.] She never goes anywhere.

I do not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you are better by this time; and I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley. I expected before this to have had tidings of another little philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favouring the world.

Have you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and *medical* discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? *Alas, ne sutor ultra crepitum!*

I hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is gone to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I passed much time with him, and he has showed me particular attentions: N.B. A thing I much like!

Your Books are all safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch away your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's the bookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will take as much care of them as myself—and you can send for them immediately from him.

*I wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grasmere about 'Christabel,' and comply with my request contained therein.*

Love to all friends round Skiddaw.

C. LAMB.

[The Coleridges had just moved to Greta Hall, Keswick.

'Bishop Taylor.' Jeremy Taylor (1613-67), Bishop of Down and Connor, author of *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.

'Another little philosopher.' Derwent Coleridge was born 14th September 1800.

Sophia Lloyd's first child, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd, was born on 31st July 1800.

The new edition of Burns was Dr. James Currie's, with a biography prefixed to the poems. It was issued, in 1800, to raise funds for the poet's wife and family.

Godwin had gone to stay with Curran: he saw much of Grattan also.

Johnson, the publisher and bookseller, lived at 72 St. Paul's Churchyard. He published Priestley's works.

The following undated letter, which may be placed a little too soon in its present position, comes with a certain fitness here.]

## 62. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[No date: 1800.]

DEAR GUTCH,

Anderson is not come home, and I am almost afraid to tell you what has happen'd, lest it should seem to have happened by my fault in not writing for you home sooner.—

This morning Henry, the eldest lad, was missing. We supposed he was only gone out on a morning's stroll, and that he would return, but he did not return & we discovered that he had opened your desk before he went, & I suppose taken all the money he could find, for on diligent search I could find none, and on opening your Letter to Anderson, which I thought necessary to get at the key, I learn that you had a good deal of money there.

Several people have been here after you to-day, & the boys seem quite frightened, and do not know what to do. In particular, one gentleman wants to have some writings finished by Tuesday—For God's sake set out by the first coach. Mary has been crying all day about it, and I am now just going to some law stationer in the neighbourhood, that the eldest boy has recommended, to get him to come and be in the house for a day or so, to manage. I cannot think what detains Anderson. His sister is quite frightend about him. I am very sorry I did not write

yesterday, but Henry persuaded me to wait till he could ascertain when some job must be done (at the furthest) for Mr. Foulkes, and as nothing had occurred besides I did not like to disturb your pleasures. I now see my error, and shall be heartily ashamed to see you.

[*That is as far as the letter goes on the first page. We then turn over, and find (as Gutch, to his immense relief, found before us) written right across both pages :*]

## A BITE!!!

Anderson is come home, and the wheels of thy business are going on as ever. The boy is honest, and I am thy friend.

And how does the coach-maker's daughter? Thou art her Phaeton, her Gig, and her Sociable. Commend me to Rob.

C. LAMB.

Saturday.

[This letter is the first example extant of Lamb's tendency to hoaxing. Gutch was at that time courting a Miss Wheeley, the daughter of a Birmingham coachbuilder. It was while he was in Birmingham that Lamb wrote the letter. Anderson was Gutch's partner in business. Rob would be Robert Lloyd, then at Birmingham again.

Sociables were carriages with two double seats facing each other and a box for the driver.]

## 63. TO THOMAS MANNING

Monday morning. [July 1800.]

I have just got your *scrap*—Pray tell me if you consider *this* as just payment for *value received*. If not, to work again, my pen. I am just now engaged in the addition of 900 pages, continent of twenty sums a piece—O the drudgery to which your great geniuses are exposed—But Jupiter wore a Bull's hide, and Apollo kept Admetus's swine, each for his goddess.—Mine is Pecunia, Blessing on her golden Looks.—

Pray write. [*Remainder torn off.*]

[Lamb's retaliatory 'scrap' I have not identified. Pecunia's Looks may be Locks.]

## 64. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Aug. 6th, 1800.

I have taken to-day, and delivered to Longman and Co., *Imprimis* : your books, viz., three ponderous German dictionaries, one volume

(I can find no more) of German and French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you left them, Percy's Ancient Poetry, and one volume of Anderson's Poets. I specify them, that you may not lose any. *Secundo*: a dressing-gown (value, fivepence), in which you used to sit and look like a conjuror, when you were translating 'Wallenstein.' A case of two razors and a shaving-box and strap. This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They are in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry papers and poems, sermons, *some few Epic Poems*,—one about Cain and Abel, which came from Poole, &c., &c., and also your tragedy; with one or two small German books, and that drama in which God-fader performs. *Tertio*: a small oblong box containing *all your letters*, collected from all your waste papers, and which fill the said little box. All other waste papers, which I judged worth sending, are in the paper parcel aforesaid. But you will find *all your letters* in the box by themselves. Thus have I discharged my conscience and my lumber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entitled Tyrrell's Bibliotheca Politica, which you used to learn your politics out of when you wrote for the Post, *mutatis mutandis*, i.e., applying past inferences to modern *data*. I retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in the politics myself; and I have torn up—don't be angry, waste paper has risen forty per cent., and I can't afford to buy it—all Buonaparte's Letters, Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn, and one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought better suited the flippancy of London discussion than the dignity of Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be in a damned passion about them when you come to miss them; but you must study philosophy. Read Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis five times over after phlebotomising,—'tis Burton's recipe—and then be angry with an absent friend if you can. I have just heard that Mrs. Lloyd is delivered of a fine boy, and mother and boy are doing well. Fie on sluggards, what is thy Sara doing? Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter, that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza Buckingham? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical—she proposes writing my name *Lamb*? *Lambe* is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti*; but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite!—the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines, to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited, the very quality of

gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpeterings. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.

I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasureable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad of the 'Old and Young Courtier;' and in its feature of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i.e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate 'and wisest Stewart' say No.

I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*,—they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for 'Lyrical Ballads.' I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters—those pretty comets with swingeing tails.

I'll just crowd in God bless you!

C. LAMB.

Wednesday night.

[The epic about Cain and Abel was *The Wanderings of Cain*, which Coleridge projected but never finished. The drama in which Got-fader performs has been identified with a dialect play by Sebastian Sailer (1714-77) on the creation and fall of Adam and Eve, a transcription of which Coleridge had brought home from Germany. See J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu*, second edition, 1932, pages 604n-r.

'Tis Burton's recipe.' Lamb was just now steeped in the *Anatomy*; but there is no need to see if Burton says this.

'Eliza Buckingham.' Sara Coleridge's message was probably intended for Eliza, a servant at the Buckingham Street lodgings.

'Lambe' was the *Anti-Jacobin's* idea of Lamb's name; and indeed many persons adhered to it at the end. Mrs. Coleridge, when writing to her husband under care of Lamb at the India House, added 'e' to Lamb's name to signify that the letter was for Coleridge. Wordsworth later also had some of his letters addressed in the same way—for the same economical reason.

Coleridge's *Lewti* was reprinted, with alterations, from the *Morning Post*, in the *Annual Antbology*, vol. 11. Line 69 ran:

Had I the enviable power;

Coleridge changed this to:

Voice of the Night! had I the power.



'*This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*; a Poem, addressed to Charles Lamb of the India House, London,' was also in the *Annual Antbology*. Lamb objected to the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' (see above). Lamb says 'five years ago'; he means three. Coleridge did not alter the phrase. It was against this poem that he wrote in pencil on his deathbed in 1834: 'Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart.—S. T. C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797—1834=37 years!'

'I have hit off the following.' *A Ballad Denoting the Difference between the Rich and the Poor*, first printed with the Imitations of Burton in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802.

'And wisest Stewart'—Stuart of the *Morning Post*. Adapted from Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*:

But wisest Fate says no.

'W.'s [Wordsworth's] tragedy' was *The Borderers*.

The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was just ready.]

#### 65. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 9th August 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the new-born infant from star-blasting and moon-blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they pretty regular correspondents, with as much wit as [? and] wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling; as much goodness as will earn heaven if there be such a place and deserve it if there be not, but, rather than go to bed solitary, would truckle with the meanest succubus on her bed of brimstone. Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me. I could *curse* the sheet full; so much stronger is corruption than grace in the Natural Man.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face, by punch-light? O! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence—yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility from Madame Sevigné and Balzac (observe my Larning!) to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife (with a child in her guts) and the young philosopher at Keswick with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary*

*world.* George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse—Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude 'personal satire,' so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell: for dinner is at hand, and yearning guts do chide.

C. L.

[Southey's letters contain a glimpse of Lamb and Manning by punch-light. Writing in 1824, describing a certain expression of Mrs. Coleridge's face, Southey says:

First, then, it was an expression of dolorous alarm, such as Le Brun ought to have painted: but such as Manning never could have equalled, when, while Mrs. Lloyd was keeping her room in child-bed, he and Charles Lamb sate drinking punch in the room below till three in the morning—Manning acting Le Brun's passions (punchified at the time), and Charles Lamb (punchified also) roaring aloud and swearing, while the tears ran down his cheeks, that it required more genius than even Shakespeare possessed to personate them so well; Charles Lloyd the while (not punchified) praying and entreating them to go to bed, and not disturb his wife by the uproar they were making.

'Balzac.' Not, of course, the novelist; but Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654) the letter-writer.

'Do chide.'

The cock doth crow, the day doth daw,  
The channering worm doth chide.

*Old Ballad.*

Replying, on 10th August, Manning says:

If you wish to see my honest face (& tis a very honest face, but I may be a damned rogue for all that for as the learned Author of the Latin Grammar judiciously observeth, 'fronti nulla fides')<sup>1</sup> you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me a particular satisfaction, you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me no cause of dissatisfaction, you must come to Cambridge—Give me a line to-morrow saying that you'll come yourself on Tuesday, & I'll prepare a lodging for you—or come without announcing your intention, if you don't chuse to write, & we'll see what we can do.—I shall be very much disengaged this week—so I shall next—after that I cannot promise.—The very thought of your coming makes my keg of Rum wabble about like a porpoise—& the liquor (how fine it smells!) goes *Gultch squalluck* against the sides for joy.]

<sup>1</sup> 'There is no trust to be placed in outward looks.'—Juvenal, *Sat.* ii. 8.

## 66. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 11th August 1800.]

My dear fellow (N.B. mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of G—d Almighty's impossibilities. Meta-physicians tell us, even He can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in 'green retreats' all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aquavitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, if mathematically divided, gives  $1\frac{1}{2}$  for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.

And elsewhere,—

*Twenty-first Sonnet.*

What neat repast shall feast us, light <sup>1</sup> and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine,<sup>2</sup> whence we may rise  
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice  
*Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?*

Indeed, the poets are full of this pleasing morality—

Veni cito, Domine Manning!

Think upon it. Excuse the paper: it is all I have.

N.B.—I lives at No. 27 Southampton Buildings, Holborn.

C. LAMB.

## 67. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*Thursday, Aug. 14, 1800.*

Read on and you'll come to the *Pens*.

My head is playing all the tunes in the world, ringing such peals. It has just finished the 'Merry Christ Church Bells,' and absolutely is beginning 'Turn again, Whittington.' Buz, buz, buz: bum, bum, bum: wheeze, wheeze, wheeze: feu, feu, feu: tinky, tinky, tinky: *craunch*. I shall certainly come to be damned at last. I have been getting drunk for two days running. I find my moral sense in the last stage of a consumption, and my religion burning as blue and faint as

<sup>1</sup> We poets generally give *light* dinners.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt the poet here alludes to port wine at 38s. the dozen.

the tops of burning bricks. Hell gapes and the Devil's great guts cry cupboard for me. In the midst of this infernal torture, Conscience (and be damn'd to her) is barking and yelping as loud as any of them.

I have sat down to read over again your satire upon me in the *Anthology* and I think I do begin to spy out something with beauty and design in it. I perfectly accede to all your alterations, and only desire that you had cut deeper, when your hand was in.

In the next edition of the '*Anthology*' (which Phœbus avert and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out *gentle-hearted*, and substitute: drunken dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard *or more delicacy*. Damn you, I was beginning to forgive you and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face *Charles Lamb of the India House*. Now I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You Dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin show-box attributes.

By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one *for you*. Now I do affirm that '*Lewti*' is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. *Therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an '*Anthology*' before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of *Lewti* being out of temper one day. In sober truth, I cannot see any great merit in the little Dialogue called '*Blenheim*.' It is rather novel and pretty; but the thought is very obvious and children's poor prattle, a thing of easy imitation. *Pauper vult videri et EST*.

'*Gaulberto*' certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to '*Lewti*' I like the '*Raven*,' which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of *Anthologies*, I must say I am sorry the old Pastoral way has fallen into disrepute. The

Gentry which now indite Sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's *Miscellanies*. But, miscellanies decaying and the old Pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and hive upon Magazines and Anthologies. This Race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are Idolators and worship the Moon. Others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility, or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number 'encroacheth upon the province of the Elegy'—*vice versa*, whatever 'cometn short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the Epigram.' I have been able to discover but few *Images* in their temples, which, like the Caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *Echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began; or whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the Island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that GEORGE DYER hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of Poetry and Criticism. They impend over the town, and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill*.) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by

excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O, George, George, with a head uniformly wrong and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes!—then I would call the Gentry of thy native Island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy Prospectus Trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy List of Subscribers. I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. [*Lamb here erases six lines.*]

Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus aptly call 'the affected.' But I am suffering from the combined effect of two days' drunkenness, and at such times it is not very easy to think or express in a natural series. The ONLY useful OBJECT of this Letter is to apprize you that on Saturday I shall transmit the PENS by the same coach I sent the Parcel. So enquire them out. You had better write to Godwin *here*, directing your letter to be forwarded to him. I don't know his address. You know your letter must at any rate come to London first. C. L.

['Your satire upon me.' *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*, where the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' occurs thrice.

'Those nine other wandering maids.' The Muses. A recollection of the *Anti-Jacobin's* verses on Lamb and his friends (see page 108).

'That scandalous piece of private history.' A reference to Coleridge's *Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, reprinted in the *Annual Antbology* from the *Morning Post*.

'Blenheim.' Southey's ballad, 'It was a summer's evening.'

'Pauper vult videri.' The shortest epigram of Martial, viii. 19, is, 'Pauper videri Cinna vult; et est pauper': It wants to be thought poor: and poor it is.

'Gaulberto.' The poem *Sr. Gualberto* by Southey, in the *Annual Antbology*.

'The Raven' was referred to in Lamb's letter of 5th February 1797.

George Dyer's *Poems*, in two volumes, were published in 1800.

'The Pens.' Coleridge seems to have depended on his friends for his writing implements. In a letter to Rickman on 14th March 1804 he says: 'The East India House has very politely made me a present thro' Mr. Charles Lamb, an *Eminent* in the Indian service, of a hundred or so of pens,' and he goes on to suggest that the House of Commons might supplement this with a gift of sealing wax.]

## 68. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 21st August 1800.]

I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into

Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things, have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Friend (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely in *rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Friend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and . . . 's brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn,—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscriptum in the blank leaf, running thus, FROM THE AUTHOR! it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world.

N.B.—Dirty books [? backs], smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise.

N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I

find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.)

So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it?—but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

['Mr. Melmoth.' A translation of the *Letters of Pliny the Younger* was made by William Melmoth in 1746.

Trismegistus—thrice greatest—was the term applied to Hermes, the mythical Egyptian philosopher. Manning had written *An Introduction to Arithmetic and Algebra*, 1796, 1798.

'Meræ nugæ': Sheer nonsense.

'... 's brains.' In a later letter Lamb uses Judge Park's wig, when his head is in it, as a simile for emptiness. The dots are in the original, which is in the Huntington Library.]

#### 69. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

August 26th, 1800.

How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.



## HELEN REPENTANT TOO LATE

1

High-born Helen, round your dwelling  
 These twenty years I've paced in vain:  
 Haughty beauty, your lover's duty  
 Has been to glory in his pain.

2

High-born Helen! proudly telling  
 Stories of your cold disdain;  
 I starve, I die, now you comply,  
 And I no longer can complain.

3

These twenty years I've lived on tears,  
 Dwelling for ever on a frown;  
 On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;  
 I perish now you kind are grown.

4

Can I, who loved my Beloved  
 But for the 'scorn was in her eye,'  
 Can I be moved for my Beloved,  
 When she 'returns me sigh for sigh?'

5

In stately pride, by my bed-side,  
 High-born Helen's portrait 's hung;  
 Deaf to my praise; my mournful lays  
 Are nightly to the portrait sung.

6

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,  
 Complaining all night long to her!  
*Helen, grown old, no longer cold,*  
 Said, 'You to all men I prefer.'

Godwin returned from Wicklow the week before last, tho' he did not reach home till the Sunday after. He might much better have spent that time with you.—But you see your invitation would have been too late. He greatly regrets the occasion he mist of visiting you, but he intends to revisit Ireland in the next summer, and then he will certainly take Keswick in his way. I dined with the Heathen on Sunday.

By-the-by, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone in Cold Bath Prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero & his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it

would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving me a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices. I have just lit upon a most beautiful fiction of hell punishments, by the author of 'Hurlothrumbo,' a mad farce. The inventor imagines that in hell there is a great caldron of hot water, in which a man can scarce hold his finger, and an immense sieve over it, into which the probationary souls are put.

And all the little souls  
Pop through the riddle holes.

Mary's love to Mrs. Coleridge—mine to all.

N.B.—I pays no Postage.—

George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.

George brought a Dr. Anderson to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with Packthread, & boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an Epic Poem by one Wilkie, called the 'Epigoniad,' in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the characters, incidents, &c., are verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 800 [? 8,000] lines, and he not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius), but it was a good while ago; and he has dipt into Rowe and Orway, I suppose having found their names in Johnson's *Lives* at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seem'd even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlow, Massinger, and the Worthies of Dodsley's Collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his 'Parallel' in the winter. I find he is

also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle & some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching* so deeply upon poet:, can I forget that I have just received from Cottle a magnificent copy of his *Guinea Epic*. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, & fainted. Mr. Cottle's genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his 'Good morrow to ye; good master Lieut.' Instead of *a man, a woman, a daughter*, he constantly writes *one a man, one a woman, one his daughter*. Instead of *the king, the hero*, he constantly writes, *he the king, he the hero*—two flowers of rhetoric palpably from the 'Joan.' But Mr. Cottle soars a higher pitch: and when he *is* original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters—My God! what a brain he must have! He puts as many plums in his pudding as my Grandmother used to do; and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into Light, and treading on pure flats of this earth for 23 Books together!

C. L.

[The little epigram was by Mary Lamb. It was printed first in the *John Woodvil* volume in 1802; and again, in a footnote to Lamb's essay, 'Blakesmoor in H—shire,' 1824.

Godwin's return was from his visit to Curran. Coleridge had asked him to break his journey at Keswick.

'Wordsworth's Tragedy.' *The Borderers*.

'Hurllothrumbo.' An opera of 1729, written by Johnson, a dancing master.

'I would write a novel.' Lamb returns to this idea, but he never carried it out. The loss is ours.

One of Dyer's printed criticisms of Shakspeare, in his *Poetics*, some years later might be quoted: 'Shakspeare had the inward clothing of a fine mind; the outward covering of solid reading, of critical observation, and the richest eloquence; and compared with these, what are the trappings of the schools?'

'Cottle's *Guinea Epic*' would be *Alfred, an Epic Poem*, by Joseph Cottle, the publisher.

For Dr. Anderson and William Wilkie see the notes to the next letter.]

## 70. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 28th August 1800.]

George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned

poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcase on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs [? Books] and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters—Shenstone, or the like? It would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his*—Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded *pia mater*; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night—he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me*; for, I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his 'Agricultural Magazine.' The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called 'Epigoniad' by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive seemingly to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's work. 'It was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it: and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 1400 lines!' I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure.

Pray come on Monday if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully

discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

['Bell Letters.' Alluding to John Bell (1745-1831), the printer and publisher chiefly of the British poets.

Dr. Anderson was James Anderson (1739-1808), the editor, at that time, of *Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous History*, published in monthly parts.

Wilkie was William Wilkie (1721-72), the 'Scottish Homer,' whose *Epigoniad* in nine books, based on the fourth book of the *Iliad*, was published in 1757.

Dr. Johnson's strictures were chiefly directed against the odes of Gray, whom he disliked, and who called him 'Ursa Major.']

#### 71. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 22nd September 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic for his body to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you must know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful goldfoils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth, where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstances; he

rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's *Æneid*, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. 'There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir, but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!' This fine genius, without anything to show for it or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name! and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot!

all that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

Avaunt friendship! and all memory of absent friends!

C. LAMB.

['Divine spirit of gravy.' This passage is the first of Lamb's outbursts of gustatory ecstasy, afterwards to become frequent in his writings; while in the letter that follows we find him, although only twenty-five, in his richest mood of comedy.

John Barbour (1316-95), author of *Bruce*; Gavin Douglas (1474-1522), author of two allegories, *The Palace of Honour* and *King Hart*, and translator of the *Æneid*.

72. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 9th, 1800.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle. I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event. He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black. Every thing wore an aspect suitable to the respect due

to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spake till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell. This was Lethe to Cottle, and his poor face wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak. I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph, who till now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, wheeled about, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations. At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and so good. I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha. At that moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians the author was as 9, the brother as 1. I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root, I went to work, and beslabber'd *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults, slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish. Pethaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things*. What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated, and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter incapacity of comprehending that there can be any thing bad in poetry. All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses*. So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I *really* had forgotten a good deal of *Alfred*, I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience. For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Phillips's Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived. To

the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head. I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments. I rather guess that the Brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together. Poor Cottle, I must leave him, after his short dream, to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta news. C. L.

[The Cottles were from Bristol. Amos Simon Cottle, whose chief work was *Icelandic Poetry*, 1797, died at Clifford's Inn, where he was George Dyer's neighbour, on 28th September 1800, aged thirty-two. Joseph, who had been a bookseller at Bristol, retired in 1799 to become an author. His epic of *Alfred* was not published till 1801. His *Early Recollections, chiefly relating to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1837, has much curious matter, but it is very inaccurate.

'Uncle Toby.' In *Tristram Shandy*.

'A candid greyhound.' Probably a confused memory of Hotspur's lines in 1 *Henry IV*:

Why, what a candy deal of courtesy  
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!

### 73. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 16th October 1800.]

Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *Feverites*; and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise with the sincerity of *Saint Peter*, and the contrition of *Sinner Peter* if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Camb. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not Libraries, Halls, Colleges, Books, Pictures, Statues?

I wish to God you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which would not have escaped



*your genius*,—a LIVE RATTLESNAKE, 10 feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his damn'd big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his damn'd mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of 'The Farmer's Boy.' I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. All is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

[*The Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield, was published in March 1800, and was immensely popular.

Lamb's visit to Cambridge was deferred until 5th January 1801.]

## 74. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 3rd November 1800.]

Ecquid meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What has happened to learned Trismegist?—Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come—are impossibilities nothing—be they abstractions of the intellects or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimum alte pendent*? Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in *Æsop*, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis really curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time.

I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant band*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand: a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody: a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry: relishes George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion: *up* to anything, *down* to everything—whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect man. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me

to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that anybody ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me,) and a promise of a definite answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene (which is too leisurely for story), and transposing that damn'd soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient, and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c., *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling-bell and death-warrant.

This is all my Lunnon news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge: namely, its being a market-town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition: it was and is, simply, the banks of the Cam or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,

C. LAMB.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the 'Farmer's Boy'—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet-dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick. Dyer knows the shoemaker (a damn'd stupid hound in company); but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends and all combinations.

[The Latin tags at the beginning of the letter are difficult to trace, but they mean:

'*Ecquid meditatur Archimedes?*': Has Archimedes any plans?

'*Impedimenta viarum*': Obstructions on the roads.

'*Racemi nimum alte pendentes*': Branches hanging too high.

Mr. Crisp was Manning's landlord, a barber in St. Mary's Passage, Cambridge. In one letter at least Lamb spells his name Crips—a joke he was fond of.

'Rickman' was John Rickman (1771-1840), already a friend of Southey's, whom he had met at Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Rickman's father lived. A graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, he was at this time living in Southampton Buildings, adjacent to Lamb, and about to become secretary to Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester. Rickman had conducted the *Commercial, Agricultural, and Manufacturer's Magazine*, and he was practically the originator of the census in England.

'A pleasant hand.' It is rather curious that in his letter to Southey, on 30th December 1800, telling of his new acquaintance, Rickman says: 'I have a very pleasant neighbour opposite, C. Lamb.' By opposite he means in Chancery Lane. Southey, who had known Rickman since 1797, would probably have arranged the introduction.

'*Wishing time of night*.' A variation on Hamlet's 'witching time of night,' III. ii. 406.

'*Sapit hominem*.' '*Hominem pagina nostra sapit*': Smacks of man.—Martial, x. 4.

George Daniel, the antiquary and bookseller, tells us that many years later he took Bloomfield to dine with Lamb at Islington.]

75. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[P.M. 28th November 1800.]

I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case!) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend) that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will.\* Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess, a bite.

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money and time*. I would be loth to think he meant

Ironic satire sidelong sklentend  
On my poor pурсie.—BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation; if they can talk sensibly and feel properly; I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world—eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers at Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with the many-sins. O City abounding in whores, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!

C. L.

[Charles Lloyd had just settled at Old Brathay, about three miles from Ambleside.

Manning's reply to this letter indicates that Lamb's story of the invitation to stay with Lloyd was a hoax. The first page ended where I have put the asterisk. Manning writes: 'N.B. Your Lake story completely took me in till I got to the 2d page. . . .'

'Beautiful Quakers of Pentonville.' This is almost certainly a reference to Hester Savory, the original of Lamb's poem *Hester*. The whole passage is the first of three eulogies of London in the letters, all very similar. To *The Londoner* we come later.]

## 76. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR SIR,

[No date: ? 4th December 1800.]

I send this speedily after the heels of Cooper (O! the dainty expression) to say that Mary is obliged to stay at home on Sunday to receive a female friend, from whom I am equally glad to escape. So that we shall be by ourselves. I write, because it may make *some* difference in your marketing, &c.

C. L.

Thursday Morning.

I am sorry to put you to the expense of twopence postage. But I calculate thus: if Mary comes she will

eat Beef 2 plates, . . . .	4d.
Batter Pudding 1 do. . . .	2d.
Beer, a pint, . . . .	2d.
Wine, 3 glasses, . . . .	11d. I drink no wine!
Chesnuts, after dinner, . . .	2d.
Tea and supper at moderate calculation, . . . .	9d.
	<hr/> 2s. 6d.
From which deduct . . . .	2d. postage
	<hr/> 2s. 4d.

You are a clear gainer by her not coming.

Thursday Morning.

[If the date be correct, this becomes the first extant letter proper which Lamb sent to the author of *Political Justice*. Godwin was then forty-four years old, and had long been busy upon his tragedy *Antonio*, in which Lamb had been assisting with suggestions.

Cooper was Godwin's servant.]

## 77. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 10th, 1800.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I expected a good deal of pleasure from your company to-morrow, but I am sorry I must beg of you to excuse me. I have been confined ever since I saw you with one of the severest colds I ever experienced, occasioned by being in the night air on Sunday, and on the following day, very foolishly. I am neither in health nor spirits to meet company. I hope and trust I shall get out on Saturday night. You will add to your many favours, by transmitting to me as early as possible as many tickets as conveniently you can spare,—Yours truly,

C. L.

I have been plotting how to abridge the Epilogue. But I cannot see that any lines can be spared, retaining the connection, except these two, which are better out.

Why should I instance, &c.,

The sick man's purpose, &c.,

and then the following line must run thus,

The truth by an example best is shown.

Excuse this *important* postscript.

## 78. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 13th December 1800.]

Don't spill the cream upon this letter.

I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out: I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for God's sake (who would not like to have so pious a *professor's* work *damn'd*) do not mention it—it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack INCIDENT*. It is about promise-breaking—you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,  
Purchased a renter's share at Drury-lane;  
A prudent man in every other matter,  
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter;  
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,  
And has been seldom known to beat his wife;  
But Jack is now grown quite another man,  
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan  
Of each new piece,

And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!  
In at the play-house just at six he pops,  
And never quits it till the curtain drops,  
Is never absent on the *author's night*,  
Knows actresses and actors too—by sight;  
So humble, that with Suett he 'll confer,  
Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;  
Nay, with an author has been known so free,  
He once suggested a catastrophe—  
In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd;  
His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourn'd,  
His customers were dropping off apace,  
And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.

One night his wife began a curtain lecture;  
'My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,  
Take pity on your helpless babes and me,  
Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy—  
Look to your business, leave these cursed plays,  
And try again your old industrious ways.'

Jack who was always scared at the Gazette,  
And had some bits of skull uninjured yet,

Promised amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,  
'He would not see another play that season—'

Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,  
Was late and early in his shop, ate, slept,  
And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;  
No *wit*, but John the hatter once again—  
Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*  
His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—  
John's *hat, wig, snuff-box*—well she knew his tricks—  
And Jack decamping at the hour of six,  
Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,  
Announcing that 'Pizarro' was the play—  
'O Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing.'  
Quoth Jack, 'Why what the devil storm's a-brewing?  
About a harmless play why all this fright?  
I'll go and see it if it's but for spite—  
Zounds, woman! Nelson's <sup>1</sup> to be there to-night.'

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*,—except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now, I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first; it begins thus:—the names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.

Ladies, ye've seen how Guzman's consort died,  
Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,  
When Spanish honour through the world was blown,  
And Spanish beauty for the best was known.<sup>2</sup>  
In that romantic, unenlighten'd time,  
A *breach of promise*<sup>3</sup> was a sort of crime—  
Which of you handsome English ladies here,  
But deems the penance bloody and severe?  
A whimsical old Saragossa<sup>4</sup> fashion,  
That a dead father's dying inclination,  
Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,<sup>5</sup>  
Unjustly on the sex *we*<sup>6</sup> men exclaim,  
Rail at *your*<sup>7</sup> vices,—and commit the same;—  
Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,  
And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb—  
What need we instance here the lover's vow,  
The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself.

<sup>2</sup> Four *easy* lines. <sup>3</sup> For which the *heroine died*. <sup>4</sup> In *Spain*!!

<sup>5</sup> Two *neat* lines. <sup>6</sup> Or *you*. <sup>7</sup> Or *our*, as *they* have altered it. <sup>8</sup> Antithesis.



The truth by few examples best is shown—  
 Instead of many which are better known,  
 Take poor Jack Incident, that 's dead and gone.  
 Jack, &c. &c. &c.

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!!  
 C. L.

['As one Tobin's.' The rehearsals of *Antonio* were attended by Godwin's friend, John Tobin, subsequently author of *The Honeymoon*, in the hope, on account of Godwin's reputation for heterodoxy, of deceiving people as to the real authorship of the play. It was, however, avowed by Godwin on the title-page.

Jack Bannister, the comedian, was a favourite actor of Lamb's. See the *Elia* essay 'On Some of the Old Actors.'

Miss Heard was a daughter of William Heard, the author of *The Snuff-Box*, a feeble comedy. Miss Tidswell, by the irony of fate, had a part in Lamb's own play, *Mr. H.*, six years later.

'I have not read the play.' Not, that is, its final form. Lamb must have read it in earlier versions.

Lamb's letter of 16th December to Manning, relating the humours of the first night, is placed here, before the letter to Godwin dated 14th December, to keep the story of *Antonio* in order.]

#### 79. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 16th, 1800.

We are damned!

Not the facetious epilogue could save us. For, as the editor of the 'Morning Post,' quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his words, their profound sense I am sure I retain,) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. PROFESSOR, thy glories wax dim. . . . Again, the incomparable author of the 'True Briton' declared in his paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O PROFESSOR, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which

indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honoured file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the 'Morning Chronicle' downwards to the 'Porcupine,') with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play—stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with; and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next, which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never answer; Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned*; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistance might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel: his face was lengthened, and ALL OVER SWEAT; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. 'From every pore of him a perfume fell.' I have seen that man in many situations, and from my soul I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in

this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper; and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

[The Professor was Lamb's name for Godwin.

'Quantum mutatus, etc.' A playful adaptation (which means: 'How changed from that professor who didst win such signal victories in the fields of philosophy!') from Virgil, *Æneid* ii. 274-5:

Quantum mutatus ab illo

Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.

'How changed from that Hector who came back to us decked in the spoils of Achilles!'

The *Porcupine* was Cobbett's paper.

After the play on the Saturday night Lamb and Godwin had supped together, to discuss the situation, and I fancy that the 'specious proposition' with which he humoured the author was a scheme of recasting it for a second attempt. If so, the following undated document was probably the result of Lamb's prompt attack on the script.]

#### 80. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: December 1800.]

*Queries.* Whether the best conclusion would not be a solemn judicial pleading, appointed by the king, before himself in person, of Antonio as proxy for Roderigo, and Guzman for himself—the forms and ordering of it to be highly solemn and grand. For this purpose (allowing it,) the king must be reserved, and not have committed his royal dignity by descending to previous conference with Antonio, but must refer from the beginning to this settlement. He must sit in dignity as a high royal arbiter. Whether this would admit of spiritual interpositions, cardinals, &c.—appeals to the Pope, and haughty rejection of his interposition by Antonio—(this merely by the way).

The pleadings must be conducted by short speeches—replies, taunts, and bitter recriminations by Antonio, in his rough style. In the midst of the undecided cause, may not a messenger break up the proceedings by an account of Roderigo's death (no improbable or far-fetch'd event), and the whole conclude with an affecting and awful invocation of Antonio upon Roderigo's spirit, now no longer dependent upon earthly tribunals or a froward woman's will, &c., &c.

Almanza's daughter is now free, &c.

This might be made *very affecting*. Better nothing follow after; if anything, she must step forward and resolve to take the veil. In this case the whole story of the former nunnery *must* be omitted. But, I think, better leave the final conclusion to the imagination of the spectator. Probably the violence of confining her in a convent is not necessary; Antonio's own castle would be sufficient.

To relieve the former part of the Play, could not some sensible images, some work for the Eye, be introduced? A gallery of Pictures, Almanza's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c.

At all events, with the present want of action, the Play must not extend above four Acts, unless it is quite new modell'd. The proposed alterations might all be effected in a few weeks.

Solemn judicial pleadings always go off well, as in Henry the 8th, Merchant of Venice, and perhaps Othello.

[Lamb, said Kegan Paul, when writing this critical Minute, was so genuinely kind and even affectionate in his criticism that Godwin did not perceive his real disapproval.

Swinburne, writing in the *Athenæum* for 13th May 1876, made an interesting comment upon one of Lamb's suggestions in the foregoing document. It contains, he remarks, 'a singular anticipation of one of the most famous passages in the work of the greatest master of our own age, the scene of the portraits in *Hernani*: "To relieve the former part of the play, could not some sensible images, some work for the eye, be introduced? A gallery of pictures, Alexander's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c." I know of no coincidence more pleasantly and strangely notable than this between the gentle genius of the loveliest among English essayists and the tragic invention of the loftiest among French poets.'

As it happened, however, any plan for a second trial was withdrawn, as we see from the letter which Lamb wrote to Godwin on the next night.

## 81. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[14th December 1800.]

Late o' Sunday.

DEAR SIR,

I have performed my office in a slovenly way, but judge for me. I sat down at 6 o'clock, and never left reading (and I read out to Mary) your play till 10. In this sitting I noted down lines as they occurred, exactly as you will read my rough paper. Do not be frightened at the bulk of my remarks, for they are almost all upon single lines, which, put together, do not amount to a hundred, and many of them merely verbal. I had but one object in view, abridgement for compression sake. I have used a dogmatical language (which is truly ludicrous when the trivial nature of my remarks is considered), and, remember, my office

was to hunt out faults. You may fairly abridge one half of them, as a fair deduction for the infirmities of Error, and a single reading, which leaves only fifty objections, most of them merely against words, on no short play. Remember, you constituted me Executioner, and a hangman has been seldom seen to be ashamed of his profession before Master Sheriff. We'll talk of the Beauties (of which I am more than ever sure) when we meet,—Yours truly,

C. L.

I will barely add, as you are on the very point of printing, that in my opinion neither prologue nor epilogue should accompany the play. It can only serve to remind your readers of its fate. *Both* suppose an audience, and, that jest being gone, must convert into burlesque. Nor would I (but therein custom and decorum must be a law) print the actors' names. Some things must be kept out of sight.

I have done, and I have but a few square inches of paper to fill up. I am emboldened by a little jorum of punch (vastly good) to say that next to *one man*, I am the most hurt at our ill success. The breast of Hecuba, where she did suckle Hector, looked not to be more lovely than Marshall's forehead when it spit forth sweat, at Critic-swords contending. I remember two honest lines by Marvel, (whose poems by the way I am just going to possess)

Where every Mower's wholesome heat  
Smells like an Alexander's sweat.

[Accompanying this letter were some textual criticisms which I have not seen beyond the solitary one which Kegan Paul cites in his *Life of Godwin*:

'Envable' is a very bad word. I allude to 'Envable right to bless us.' For instance, Burns, comparing the ills of manhood with the state of infancy, says, 'Oh! enviable early days'; here 'tis good, because the passion lay in comparison. Excuse my insulting your judgment with an illustration. I believe I only wanted to lug in the name of a favourite Bardie, or at most to confirm my own judgment.

Lamb, it will be remembered, had refused to let Coleridge use 'enviable' in *Lewti*. Burns's poem to which Lamb alludes is *Despondency, an Ode*, stanza 5, 'Oh! enviable, early days.'

Godwin's play was published in 1801 without Lamb's epilogue.]

## 82 and 83. TO THOMAS MANNING

[19th December 1800.]

I send you all of Coleridge's letters to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on 'Pride's Cure,' by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly

suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) in statu quo, till I come to claim mine own.

C. LAMB.

*Written on the outside :*

For Mister Manning, Teacher of the Mathematics and the black arts.

There is another letter in the inside cover of the book opposite the *blank leaf* that *was*.

Mind this goes for a letter. (Acknowledge it *directly*, if only in ten words.)

DEAR MANNING,

(I shall want to hear this comes safe.) I have scratched out a good deal, as you will see. Generally, what I have rejected was either *false* in *feeling*, or a violation of character—mostly of the first sort. I will here just instance in the concluding few lines of the 'Dying Lover's Story,' which completely contradicted his character of *silent* and *unreproachful*. I hesitated a good deal what copy to send you, and at last resolved to send the worst, because you are familiar with it, and can make it out; and a stranger would find so much difficulty in doing it, that it would give him more pain than pleasure.

This is compounded precisely of the two persons' hands you requested it should be.—Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[These were the letters accompanying the copy of *Pride's Cure* (or *John Woodvil*) which Charles and Mary Lamb together made for Manning. He had asked for it, as appears from Letter 78.]

#### 84. TO THOMAS MANNING

*December 27th, 1800.*

At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that 's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and caught up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence;—'Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled*!'

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian Travels* for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? Is *morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morn-

ing, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument*; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking-pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville. C. LAMB.

[George Dyer's phrenesis was caused by his infatuation for Miss Benger.

Godwin's Persian drama was *Abbas, King of Persia*, but he could not get it acted. The reference to Fénelon is in Godwin's *Political Justice* (first edition, vol. i, page 84) where he argues on the comparative worth of the persons of Fénelon, a chambermaid, and Godwin's mother, supposing them to have been present at the famous fire at Cambrai and only one of them to be saved. (As a matter of fact Fénelon was not at the fire.)

'I have metal more attractive on foot.' See *Hamlet*, III. ii. 116.

'Many snipes.' Writing on 28th November Manning had said: 'The snipes shall present themselves to you, ready roasted—you shall take the digestible parts, and I'll take the long bills.'

That Lamb at last visited Cambridge we know from a letter to Robert Lloyd, dated 7th February 1801.

In a letter on 26th January 1801 from Manning to Charles Lamb we learn that Lamb had recently written to him the same note three times, saying merely: 'I am moved to despair because I have heard nothing from you.'

We now come to Lamb's first letter to Wordsworth.]

## 85. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 30th January 1801.

Thanks for your Letter and Present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are, the Song of Lucy. . . . *Simon's sickly daughter* in the Sexton made me cry. Next to these are the description of the continuous Echoes in the story of Joanna's laugh, where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive—and that fine Shakesperian character of the Happy Man, in the Brothers,

——that creeps about the fields,

Following his fancies by the hour, to bring

Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles

Into his face, *until the Setting Sun*

*Write Fool upon his forehead.*



I will mention one more: the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the Cumberland Beggar, that he may have about him the melody of Birds, altho' he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and, in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish.—The Poet's Epitaph is disfigured, to my taste by the vulgar satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of pin point in the 6th stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the Beggar, that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader, while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, I will teach you how to think upon this subject. This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne and many many novelists & modern poets, who continually put a sign post up to shew where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid. Very different from Robinson Crusoe, the Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random, and other beautiful bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between Author and reader; I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it. Modern novels 'St. Leons' and the like are full of such flowers as these 'Let not my reader suppose,' 'Imagine, if you can'—modest!—&c.—I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation.—I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his Ancient Marinere 'a poet's Reverie'—it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a Lion but only the scenical representation of a Lion. What new idea is gained by this Title, but one subversive of all credit, which the tale should force upon us, of its truth? For me, I was never so affected with any human Tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days—I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery dragged me along like Tom Piper's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the Marinere should have had a character and profession. This is a Beauty in Gulliver's Travels, where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the Ancient Marinere undergoes such Trials, as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was, like the state of a man in a Bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is: that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is I think as well a little unfounded: the Marinere from being conversant in supernatural events *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase, eye, appearance, &c.* which frighten the wedding guest.

You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see. To sum up a general opinion of the second vol.—I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the *Ancient Marinere*, the *Mad Mother*, and the *Lines at Tintern Abbey* in the first.—I could, too, have wished the *Critical preface* had appeared in a separate treatise. All its dogmas are true and just, and most of them new, *as criticism*. But they associate a *diminishing* idea with the Poems which follow, as having been written for *Experiment* on the public taste, more than having sprung (as they must have done) from living and daily circumstances.—I am prolix, because I am gratified in the opportunity of writing to you, and I don't well know when to leave off. I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your Sister I could gang any where. But I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles,—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade,—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much Life.—All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?—

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. - Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do

not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of anything. Your sun & moon and skys and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof, beautifully painted but unable to satisfy the mind, and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the Beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh & green and warm are all the inventions of men and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. & yourself and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.

C. LAMB.

Thank you for Liking my Play!!

[This is the first—and perhaps the finest—letter from Lamb to Wordsworth that has been preserved, although there must, I think, have been a predecessor accompanying *John Woodvil*. Wordsworth, then living with his sister Dorothy at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, was nearly thirty-one years of age; Lamb was nearly twenty-six. The work criticized is the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. The second and sixth stanzas of the *Poet's Epitaph* ran thus:

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;  
Go, carry to some other place  
The hardness of thy coward eye,  
The falsehood of thy sallow face.

Wrapp'd closely in thy sensual fleece  
O turn aside, and take, I pray,  
That he below may rest in peace,  
Thy pin-point of a soul away!

Later 'the coarse epithet of pin-point' was removed and 'ever-dwindling soul' substituted.

*St. Leon* was a novel by Godwin.

Of *The Ancient Mariner*, a *Poet's Reverie*, Wordsworth had said in a note to the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*:

The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the controul of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural; secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon; thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated.

'The Mad Mother.' The poem beginning, 'Her eyes are wild, her head is bare.'

'I could, too, have wished.' The passage from these words to 'don't well know when to leave off' used to be omitted in the editions of Lamb's letters.

When Wordsworth sent the correspondence to Moxon, for Talfourd's use, in 1835, he wrote:

There are, however, in them some parts which had better be kept back. . . . I have also thought it proper to suppress every word of criticism [Wordsworth meant adverse criticism] upon my own poems. . . . Those relating to my works are withheld, partly because I shrink from the thought of assisting in any way to spread my own praises, and still more I being convinced that the opinions or judgments of friends given in this way are of little value.

'Joanna.' Joanna of the laugh. See *Poems on the Naming of Places*, II, 'To Joanna.' 'Barbara Lewthwaite.' See Wordsworth's *Pet Lamb* with his prefatory note.

'Thank you for Liking my Play!!' We must suppose this postscript to contain a touch of sarcasm. Lamb had sent *John Woodvil* to Crasmore and Keswick. Wordsworth apparently had been but politely interested in it. Coleridge had written to Godwin: 'Talking of tragedies, at every perusal my love and admiration of his [Lamb's] play rises a peg.'

The eulogy of London, one of Lamb's first efforts in this accumulative Elian manner, was, as we shall see, to be worked up for print.]

#### 86. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: *Tuesday, 3rd February (1801).*

Manning, what is the matter? My mind misgives me desperately that you take something amiss. I commissioned to give you a letter on Saturday, but it has produced no reply. Relieve me from a troublesome uncertainty by *but one line*.

Tuesday, 3 Feb. (1801).

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

[The name of Lamb's agent is missing.]

#### 87. TO THOMAS MANNING

*Feb. 15, 1801.*

I had need be cautious henceforward what opinion I give of the 'Lyrical Ballads.' All the North of England are in a turmoil. Cumberland and Westmoreland have already declared a state of war. I lately received from Wordsworth a copy of the second volume, accompanied by an acknowledgement of having received from me many months since a copy of a certain Tragedy, with excuses for not having made any acknowledgement sooner, it being owing to an 'almost insurmountable aversion from Letter-writing.' This letter I answered in due form and time, and enumerated several of the passages which had

most affected me, adding, unfortunately, that no single piece had moved me so forcibly as the *Ancient Mariner*, *The Mad Mother*, or the *Lines at Tintern Abbey*. The Post did not sleep a moment. I received almost instantaneously a long letter of four sweating pages from my Reluctant Letter-Writer, the purport of which was, that he was sorry his 2d vol. had not given me more pleasure (Devil a hint did I give that it had *not pleased me*), and 'was compelled to wish that my range of sensibility was more extended, being obliged to believe that I should receive large influxes of happiness and happy Thoughts' (I suppose from the L. B.)—With a deal of stuff about a certain Union of Tenderness and Imagination, which in the sense he used Imagination was not the characteristic of Shakspeare, but which Milton possessed in a degree far exceeding other Poets: which Union, as the highest species of Poetry, and chiefly deserving that name, 'He was most proud to aspire to'; then illustrating the said Union by two quotations from his own 2d vol. (which I had been so unfortunate as to miss). 1st Specimen—a father addresses his son:

When thou  
First camest into the World, as it befalls  
To new-born Infants, thou didst sleep away  
Two days: and *Blessings from thy father's Tongue*  
*Then fell upon thee.*

The lines were thus undermarked, and then followed 'This Passage, as combining in an extraordinary degree that Union of Imagination and Tenderness which I am speaking of, I consider as one of the Best I ever wrote!'

2d Specimen.—A youth, after years of absence, revisits his native place, and thinks (as most people do) that there has been strange alteration in his absence:—

And that the rocks  
And everlasting Hills themselves were changed.

You see both these are good Poetry: but after one has been reading Shakspeare twenty of the best years of one's life, to have a fellow start up, and prate about some unknown quality, which Shakspeare possessed in a degree inferior to Milton and *somebody else!!* This was not to be *all* my castigation. Coleridge, who had not written to me some months before, starts up from his bed of sickness to reprove me for my hardy presumption: four long pages, equally sweaty and more tedious, came from him; assuring me that, when the works of a man of true genius such as W. undoubtedly was, do not please me at first sight, I should suspect the fault to lie 'in me and not in them,' etc. etc. etc. etc. What am I to do with such people? I certainly shall write them a very merry Letter. Writing to *you*, I may say that the 2d vol. has no

such pieces as the three I enumerated. It is full of original thinking and an observing mind, but it does not often make you laugh or cry.—It too artfully aims at simplicity of expression. And you sometimes doubt if Simplicity be not a cover for Poverty. The best Piece in it I will send you, being *short*. I have grievously offended my friends in the North by declaring my undue preference; but I need not fear you:—

She dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the Springs of Dove,  
A maid whom there were few [none] to praise  
And very few to love.

A violet, by a mossy stone,  
Half hidden from the eye.  
Fair as a star when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown; and few could know,  
When Lucy ceased to be.  
But she is in the [her] grave, and oh!  
The difference to me.

This is choice and genuine, and so are many, many more. But one does not like to have 'em rammed down one's throat. 'Pray, take it—it's very good—let me help you—eat faster.'

At length George Dyer's first volume is come to a birth. One volume of three—subscribers being allowed by the prospectus to pay for all at once (tho' it's very doubtful if the rest ever come to anything, this having been already some years getting out). I paid two guineas for you and myself, which entitle us to the whole. I will send you your copy, if you are in a *great hurry*. Meantime you owe me a guinea.

George skipped about like a scorched pea at the receipt of so much cash. To give you a specimen of the beautiful absurdity of the notes, which defy imitation, take one: 'Discrimination is not the *aim* of the present volume. It will be more strictly attended to in the next.' One of the sonnets purports to have been written in Bedlam! This for a man to own!

The rest are addressed to Science, Genius, Melancholy—&c. &c.—two, to the River Cam—an Ode to the Nightingale. Another to Howard, beginning: 'Spirit of meek Philanthropy!' One is entitled *The Madman*—'being collected by the author from several Madhouses.' It begins: 'Yes, yes,—'tis He!' A long poetical satire is addressed to 'John Disney, D.D.—his wife and daughter!!!'

Now to my own affairs. I have not taken that thing to Colman, but I have proceeded one step in the business. I have enquired his address, and am promised it in a few days: Meantime three acts and a

half are finished galloping, of a Play on a Persian story which I must father in April. But far, very far, from *Antonio* in composition. O Jephtha, Judge of Israel, what a fool I was! C. LAMB.

[It cannot be too much regretted that Lamb's 'very merry Letter' in answer to Wordsworth and Coleridge's remonstrances has not been preserved.

'That thing,' *John Woodvil*, I suppose. George Colman, the younger, was the manager of the Haymarket Theatre.

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!—

*Hamlet*, II. ii. 432.

Manning's reply covered another set of three of Lamb's letters, or rather notes, which have not, however, been preserved. I quote a little:

How could you think I should refuse to write to you? Had you no easier way of solving the Phenomenon? You Dramatic Writers are very expert in *framing* Incidents to produce strange effects—'tis very odd then when strange things *do* really take place, that you can't *fit them* with proper incidents for their causes. Suppose you had invented that I went out of Cambridge—in a hurry and left no word where my letters should be sent after me? Or, suppose—anything else.—At any rate never suppose me *mortally* offended, till I give you *positive* indications of it.

I have not time to give you my opinion of the 2d. Vol. of *Ly. Ballads*, except that I think 'tis utterly absurd from one end to the other—*You tell me 'tis good poetry*—if you mean that there is nothing puerile, nothing Bombast or conceited, or anything else that is so often found to disfigure *poetry*, I agree, but will you read it over and over again? Answer me that, Master Lamb—]

## 88. TO THOMAS MANNING

[*Late February 1801.*]

You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies), that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I expressed an apprehension that you are mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well; but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true I might have imaged to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also, and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental

forms; or that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity-bogs when my letters came. In short, my genius (which is a short word now-a-days for what-a-great-man-am-I) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruse of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil: and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook! Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle! I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyric muse *this century* can justly boast: for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

Please to advert to pages 291 to 296 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—

But it seems, like the Devil,  
Buried in Cole Harbour,  
Some say she 's risen again,  
Gone 'prentice to a Barber.

N.B.—I don't charge anything for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, John Stoddart, Esq.

N.B. the 2nd.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable.

So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my back tingles from the northern castigation. I send you the three letters, which I beg you to return along with those former letters, which I hope you are not going to print by your detention. But don't be in a hurry to send them. When you come to town will do. Apropos of coming to town, last Sunday was a fortnight, as I was coming to town from the Professor's, inspired with new rum, I tumbled down, and broke my nose. I drink nothing stronger than malt liquors.

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tiptoe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills, at the upper end of King's Bench walks in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the



encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind; for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em), since I have resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urban manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of [that] enchanting, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toyshops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastrycooks! St. Paul's Churchyard! the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse. These are thy gods, O London! Ain't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam! Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. Between you and me, the *Lyrical Ballads* are but drowsy performances.

C. LAMB (as you may guess).

['You masters of logic' is Lamb's counter to Manning's 'You dramatic writers,' Lamb keeping up the idea that all graduates of the universities were great logicians.

Stoddart we have already met; see Letter 3, page 16. He had translated, with Georg Heinrich Noehden, Schiller's *Fiesco*, 1796, and *Don Carlos*, 1798. The copy of Dyer's *Poems* annotated by Lamb and Stoddart I have not seen.

Two of the three letters containing the northern castigation are unhappily lost.

'I am going to change my lodgings.' The Lambs were still at 27 Southampton Buildings; they moved to 16 Mitre Court Buildings just before Lady Day 1801.

'James, Walter, and the parson.' In Wordsworth's poem *The Brothers*.

Exeter Change, which stood where Burleigh Street now is, was a great building, with bookstalls and miscellaneous stalls on the ground floor, and a menagerie above. It was demolished in 1829.]

I was not aware that you owed me anything beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16 Mitre-court Buildings, a

pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story for the air! He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them! His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for it's pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will shew you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcase with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room: casement windows with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving. The very bed on which Manning lay—the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! 'The very bed on which thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hands of ruffians—' (upholsterers' men,) &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day-guest.

I have been ill more than [a] month, with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking.

[Francis Maseres (1731-1824), whom Lamb mentions again in his *Elia* essay on 'The Old Benchers,' was the mathematician (hence his interest to Manning) and reformer. His rooms were at 5 King's Bench Walk. He became Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer in 1773. To the end he wore a three-cornered hat, a wig and ruffles. Priestley praised the Baron's mathematical labours, in which he had the support of William Frend.

Belvidera in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved*, one of Mrs. Siddons's famous parts.]

## 90. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[No date: ? April 1801.]

I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr. Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied the having received a letter from you. The one

for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall Street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the Post Department rectified.

N.B. There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct yours to me in Mitre Court; my true address is Mitre Court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two!!) in Mitre Court. His duns and girls frequently stumble up to me, and I am obliged to satisfy both in the best way I am able.

Farewell and think upon it.

C. L.

[Manning's letter about Brown having vanished, I cannot explain.]

#### 91. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

June 29, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

Doctor Christy's Brother and Sister are come to town, and have shown me great civilities. I in return wish to requite them, having, *by God's grace*, principles of generosity *implanted* (as the moralists say) in my nature, which have been duly cultivated and watered by good and religious friends, and a pious education. They have picked up in the northern parts of the island an astonishing admiration of the great author of the New Philosophy in England, and I have ventured to promise their taste an evening's gratification by seeing Mr. Godwin *face to face!!!* Will you do them and me *in* them the pleasure of drinking tea and supping with me at the *old* number 16 on Friday or Saturday next? An early nomination of the day will very much oblige yours sincerely,

CH. LAMB.

[Dr. Christy's brother and sister I do not identify.]

## 92. TO ROBERT LLOYD

June 26, 1801.

Cooke in 'Richard the Third' is a perfect caricature. He gives you the *monster* Richard, but not the *man* Richard. Shakspeare's bloody character impresses you with awe and deep admiration of his witty parts, his consummate hypocrisy, and indefatigable prosecution of purpose. You despise, detest, and loathe the cunning, vulgar, low and fierce Richard, which Cooke substitutes in his place. He gives you no other idea than of a vulgar villain, rejoicing in his being able to overreach, and not possessing that joy in *silent* consciousness, but betraying it, like a *poor* villain, in sneers and distortions of the face, like a droll at a country fair; not to add that cunning so self-betraying and manner so vulgar could never have deceived the politic Buckingham nor the soft Lady Anne: *both* bred in courts, would have turned with disgust from such a fellow. Not but Cooke has *powers*; but not of discrimination. His manner is strong, coarse, and vigorous, and well adapted to some characters. But the lofty imagery and high sentiments and high passions of *Poetry* come black and prose-smoked from his prose Lips. I have not seen him in *Overreach*, but from what I remember of the character, I think he could not have chosen one more fit. I thought the play a highly finished one when I read it some time back. I remember a most noble image. Sir Giles, drawing his sword in the last scene, says:

Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,  
And takes away the use on't.

This is horribly fine, and I am not sure that it did not suggest to me my conclusion of *Pride's Cure*; but my imitation is miserably inferior:

This arm was busy in the day of Naseby:  
'Tis paralytic now, and knows no use of weapons.

Pierre and Jaffier are the best things in Otway. Belvidera is a poor Creature, and has had more than her due fame. Monimia is a little better, but she *whines*. I like Calista in the *Fair Penitent* better than either of Otway's women. Lee's *Massacre of Paris* is a noble play, very chastely and finely written. His *Alexander* is full of that madness 'which rightly should possess a poet's brain.' *Cædipus* is also a fine play, but less so than these two. It is a joint production of Lee and Dryden. *All For Love* begins with uncommon Spirit, but soon flags, and is of no worth upon the whole. The last scene of Young's *Revenge* is sublime: the rest of it not worth 1d.

I want to have your opinion and Plumstead's on Cooke's *Richard the Third*. I am possessed with an admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mouning spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties

can depress. Shakspeare has not made Richard so black a Monster as is supposed. Wherever he is monstrous, it was to conform to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a Man. Read his most exquisite address to the Widowed Queen to court her daughter for him—the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied. Richard must have *felt* before he could feign so well; tho' ambition choked the good seed. I think it the most finished piece of Eloquence in the world; of *persuasive* oratory far above Demosthenes, Burke, or any man, far exceeding the courtship of Lady Anne. Her relenting is barely natural, after all; the more perhaps S.'s merit to make *impossible* appear *probable*, but the *Queen's consent* (taking in all the circumstances and topics, *private* and *public*, with his angelic address, able to draw the host of [piece cut out of letter] Lucifer) is *probable*; and [piece cut out of letter] resisted it. This observation applies to many other parts. All the inconsistency is, that Shakspeare's better genius was forced to struggle against the prejudices which made a monster of Richard. He set out to paint a *monster*, but his human sympathies produced a *man*.

Are you not tired with all this *ingenious* criticism? I am.

*Richard itself* is totally metamorphosed in the wretched *acting play* of that name, which you will see, altered by Cibber.

God bless you.

C. LAMB.

[Cooke was George Frederick Cooke, upon whom, in this part, Lamb wrote a notice for the *Morning Post* for 8th January 1802. The summarized criticisms of the seventeenth-century drama are another foretaste of the notes to the *Dramatic Specimens* which Lamb was to be busy with a few years later.

Plumstead was one of the Lloyd brothers.

It might be worth recording as an incident that when Randal Norris was married to Elizabeth Faint, at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, on 8th July 1801, Mary Lamb was well enough to be one of the witnesses.]

### 93. TO WALTER WILSON

DEAR WILSON,

August 14th, 1801.

I am extremely sorry that any serious difference should subsist between us on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before—that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight

and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me, very affectionately yours.

C. LAMB.

[Walter Wilson (1781–1847) was, perhaps, at this time, and certainly previously, in the India House with Lamb. Later he became a bookseller, and then in 1812, on inheriting money from John Walter, of *The Times*, to whom he was related, he became owner of a share in that paper and entered at the Inner Temple. We meet him again many years later in the correspondence, in connection with his *Life of Defoe*, 1830.

Some personal recollections and a character sketch of Lamb, written by Wilson in 1836, which have recently come to light, contain a passage referring to the Richmond escapade. Thus:

The propensity of my friend to fun and frolic, would occasionally bring him into scrapes; and his harmless sports terminated sometimes otherwise than he intended. Of some such I have been myself an eye-witness. But every one knew that there was not a particle of malignity in his composition; and I am not aware that any one ever cherished the least feeling of animosity towards him. Indeed, the reverse of this I have known to be the case, as soon as the unlucky sufferer had time to recover from his surprise. He was a good judge of human character, and could discriminate between the excellencies and the weaknesses that reside in the same individual. It was one of his leading characteristics to shoot folly as it flies; and his habitual readiness enabled him to grasp the fitting occasion for discharging his arrows of wit and ridicule, although more in the way of harmless mirth than of caustic severity. Cheerfulness was a predominant feature in his character; and he was desirous of imparting that feeling to others which contributed so materially to his own happiness. He had an instinctive desire for life, and I have heard him say, in his own strong language, when a young man, that he would rather live on board the galleys than not live at all. He possessed more refinement of mind than of manners, and was ever ready to make ample amends for his indiscretions. In the hilarity of the moment he would sometimes play off his jokes upon his own friends, who knew him too well to take umbrage at such things. . . .

Some of his frolics, however, were of a more dangerous description. I remember going with him by water upon a party of pleasure to Richmond, accompanied by some of our mutual acquaintances. Upon our return to

town, after roaming about the delightful scenery of the neighbourhood, those in the boat found the utmost difficulty in restraining him from the performance of some of his accustomed gambols. Not satisfied with sporting his wit, he was for giving it {vent?}<sup>1</sup> by those bodily movements that were quite unsuited to so unsteady a conveyance in the watery element. The consequence was that the boat was within a hair's-breadth of being upset; and if none of us had received any other injury than a ducking I believe he was the only one who would have viewed it in the nature of a sport. He had placed us all, however, in imminent peril; and the contemplation of it after our escape was anything but satisfactory. Availing myself of the privilege of a friend, I wrote to him a letter of remonstrance upon his conduct, desecanting at the same time upon some other matters in amicable debate between us. Like the late Rowland Hill, he could not restrain his wit, even upon the most solemn subjects. This I considered offensive, and expressed myself accordingly. His reply, which I have still by me, was just such as might be expected from a right-minded person, whose heart also was in its right place. Characterized by simplicity, by good feeling, and by an excellent judgment, it was calculated to produce all the effect he could desire, and which it did produce. Our friendship did not suffer a momentary interruption; nor am I conscious that so much as an angry word ever passed between us. I always found him the same kind single-hearted creature, and now look back upon our early intercourse with unmixed pleasure and satisfaction.

One wonders if the following passage in Hazlitt's essay 'On Coffee-House Politicians' in *Table Talk* has any reference to the Richmond incident:

Elia, the grave and witty, says things not to be surpassed in essence: but the manner is more painful and less a relief to my own thoughts. Some one conceived he could not be an excellent companion, because he was seen walking down the side of the Thames, *passibus iniquis*, after dining at Richmond. The objection was not valid.]

#### 94. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING,

[22nd August 1801.]

I have forborne writing so long (and so have you, for the matter of that), until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you—I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson; any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in 'Saint Mark.' For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor 'Albion' died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply

<sup>1</sup> Illegible in the original.

to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism—they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months interruption.

I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ'-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the 'Albion':—

Though thou 'rt like Judas, an apostate black,  
In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;  
When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,  
He went away, and wisely hanged himself:  
This thou may [may'st] do at last, yet much I doubt,  
If thou hast any Bowels to gush out!

Yours, as ever,

C. LAMB.

[The nobleman in "Saint Mark.""] Lamb was thinking of Luke xiv. 16-24.

The *Albion* was at the time of its decease owned and edited by John Fenwick, a friend of Lamb's whom we shall meet again. Lamb told the story in the *Elia* essay on 'Newspapers.')

## 95. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 31st August 1801.]

I *heard* that you were going to China, with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective*. But I did *not* know that *London* lay in your way to Peking. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a 'Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century,' which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of 'The Albion' (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil); but becoming of no use when 'The Albion' stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

'The Albion' is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of opening to the 'Morning Chronicle,'!!! Mister Manning, by means



of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry the editor yet: but I am preparing a specimen. I shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mister Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs, thinks 'The Albion' *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'import* (as they say in French): any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going, what [it] seems to me I can never recover—a *finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory you may be sure! for rating this man so highly at the expense of —, and —, and —, and M—, and —, and —, and —. But Mister Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in his Appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which. Do you remember an instance from Homer (who understood these matters tolerably well) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead.

I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple.

C. L.

[Manning had taken up Chinese at Cambridge, and in 1800 he moved to Paris to study the language under Dr. Hagaz. He did not, however, go to China until 1806. The Wedgwoods were Coleridge's patrons. Lamb's reference to them is, of course, a joke.

'Dead as nail in door.' 2 *Henry IV*, v. iii. 123-4.

The *Morning Chronicle* was then the chief Whig paper, the principal opponent of the *Morning Post*. I have, I think, traced two or three of Lamb's contributions to the *Chronicle* at this period, but they are not of his best. He quickly moved on to the *Post*, but, as we shall see, only for a short period.

Rickman went to Dublin in 1801 with Abbot, the Chief Secretary for

Ireland, and was appointed Deputy-Keeper of the Privy Seal. He returned in February 1802.

The reference to Burke is to his justification of his particular solicitude for the Crown, as the part of the British Constitution then in danger, though not in itself more important than the other parts, in the 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.' The Priam-Hector illustration is there employed.

'Homer.' See the *Iliad*, Book xxiv, lines 248-51.]

## 96. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR SIR,

Sep. 9, 1801.

Nothing runs in my head when I think of your story, but that you should make it as like the life of Savage as possible. That is a known and familiar tale, and its effect on the public mind has been very great. Many of the incidents in the true history are readily made dramatical. For instance, Savage used to walk backwards and forwards o' nights to his mother's window, to catch a glimpse of her, as she passed with a candle. With some such situation the play might happily open. I would plunge my Hero, exactly like Savage, into difficulties and embarrassments, the consequences of an unsettled mind: out of which he may be extricated by the unknown interference of his mother. He should be attended from the beginning by a friend, who should stand in much the same relation towards him as Horatio to Altamont in the play of the Fair Penitent. A character of this sort seems indispensable. This friend might gain interviews with the mother, when the son was refused sight of her. Like Horatio with Calista, he might wring his [her ?] soul. Like Horatio, he might learn the secret *first*. He might be exactly in the same perplexing situation, when he had learned it, whether to tell it or conceal it from the Son (I have still Savage in my head) [the Son] might *kill* a man (as he did) in an affray—he should receive a pardon, as Savage did—and the mother might interfere to have him *banished*. This should provoke the Friend to demand an interview with her husband, and disclose the whole secret. The husband, refusing to believe anything to her dishonour, should fight with him. The husband repents before he dies. The mother explains and confesses everything in his presence. The son is admitted to an interview with his now acknowledged mother. Instead of embraces, she resolves to abstract herself from all pleasure, even from his sight, in voluntary penance all her days after. This is crude indeed !! but I am totally unable to suggest a better. I am the worst hand in the world at a plot. But I understand enough of passion to predict that your story, with some of Savage's,

[Postmark 27th May, 1796.]

DEAR C—

Make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill, when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life, so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me, if I had it.

With regard to Allen,—the woman he has married has some money, I have heard about £200 a year, enough for the maintenance of herself & children, one of whom is a girl nine years old! so Allen has dipt betimes into the cares of a family. I very seldom see him, & do not know whether he has given up the Westminster hospital.

When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em,—a Guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the Work. The extracts from it in the Monthly Review, and the short passages in your Watchman seem to me much superior to any thing in his partnership account with Lovell.

Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from Religious Musings, but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that Paper—it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of 'dissonant mood' to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the Evidences of Religion. There is need of multiplying such books an hundred fold in this philosophical age to *prevent* converts to Atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards. I am sincerely sorry for Allen, as a family man particularly.

Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy, living with his Mother, a widow Lady. He will of course initiate him quickly in 'whatsoever things are lovely, honorable, and of good report.' He has cut Miss Hunt compleatly,—the poor Girl is very ill on the Occasion, but he laughs at it, and justifies himself by saying, 'she does not see him laugh.' Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol—my life has been somewhat diversified of late. The 6 weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton—I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was—and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all told.

My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you.

I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which if I finish I publish.

White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow &c—, a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw.

Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another Person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid Intervals.

#### TO MY SISTER

If from my lips some angry accents fell,  
 Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,  
 'Twas but the error of a sickly mind,  
 And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,  
 And waters clear, of Reason; and for me,  
 Let this my verse the poor atonement be,  
 My verse, which thou to praise wast ever inclined  
 Too highly, and with a partial eye to see  
 No blemish: thou to me didst ever shew  
 Fondest affection, and woud'st oftimes lend  
 An ear to the desponding love sick lay,  
 Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay  
 But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,  
 Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C—, I conclude—

Yours sincerely

LAMB.

Your Conciones ad populum are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

Write, when convenient—not as a task, for there is nothing in this letter to answer.

You may inclose under cover to me at the India house what letters you please, for they come post free.

We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C— not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

My civic and poetic compts to Southey if at Bristol.—Why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards—the small minnow I—

[This is the earliest letter written by Charles Lamb that has come down to us. On 10th February 1796, he had become twenty-one, and was now living at 7 Little Queen Street (since lost beneath the site of Holy Trinity Church in

Kingsway) with his father, mother, Sarah Lamb (known as Aunt Hetty), Mary Lamb, his sister, and, possibly, John Lamb, his elder brother. John Lamb senior was doing nothing and had, I think, already begun to break up: his old master, Samuel Salt, had died in February 1792. John Lamb (born 5th June 1763) had a clerkship at the South Sea House; Charles Lamb had begun his long period of service in the India House; and Mary Lamb (born 3rd December 1764) was occupied as a mantua-maker.

At the time of this letter Coleridge was twenty-three; he would be twenty-four on 21st October. His military experiences over, he had married Sara Fricker on 4th October 1795 (a month before Southey married her sister Edith), and was living at Bristol, on Redcliffe Hill. The first number of the *Watchman* was dated 1st March 1796; on 13th May 1796, it came to an end. On 16th April 1796, Joseph Cottle of Bristol, of whom later we shall hear more, had issued Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects*, containing also four 'effusions' by Charles Lamb (Nos. VII, XI, XII, and XIII), and the *Religious Musings*. Southey, on bad terms with Coleridge, partly on account of Southey's abandonment of Pantisocracy, had recently returned from Lisbon. His *Joan of Arc* had just been published by Cottle in quarto at a guinea. Previously he had collaborated in *The Fall of Robespierre*, 1794, with Coleridge and Robert Lovell. Each, one evening, had set forth to write an act by the next. Southey and Lovell did so, but Coleridge brought only a part of his. Lovell's being useless, Southey rewrote his act, Coleridge finished his at leisure, and the result was published at Cambridge by Coleridge as a pamphlet and appears among his works. Robert Lovell (1770?-96) had also been associated with Coleridge and Southey in their Pantisocratic dreams. Having married Mary Fricker, he was their brother-in-law. When, in 1795, Southey and Lovell had published a joint volume of *Poems*, Southey took the pseudonym of Bion and Lovell of Moschus.

May was the landlord of the 'Salutation and Cat' in Newgate Street where Coleridge had stayed and Lamb had made merry with him. We must suppose that when Coleridge quitted this inn in January 1795, he was unable to pay his bill, and therefore had to leave his luggage behind. Cottle's story of Coleridge being offered free lodging by a London innkeeper, if he would only talk and talk, must then either be a pretty invention or apply to another landlord, possibly the host of the 'Angel' in Butcher Hall Street.

Allen was Robert Allen, a schoolfellow of Lamb and Coleridge, and Coleridge's first friend. He was born on 18th October 1772. Both Lamb and Leigh Hunt tell good stories of him at Christ's Hospital, Lamb in *Elia* and Hunt in his *Autobiography*. He died of apoplexy in 1805.

Coleridge's employment on the *Evidences of Religion*, whatever it may have been, did not reach print.

Le Grice was Charles Valentine Le Grice (1773-1858), an old Christ's Hospitaler and Grecian (see Lamb's *Elia* essays on 'Christ's Hospital' and 'Grace before Meat').

Of Lamb's confinement in a madhouse we know no more than is here told. It is conjectured that 'another person' to whom he refers was Ann Simmons, a girl at Widford in Hertfordshire, where his maternal grandmother lived, for whom he had an attachment that had been discouraged, if not forbidden, by her friends. This is the only attack of the kind that Lamb is known to have suffered. He once told Coleridge that during his illness he sometimes believed himself to be Young Norval in Home's *Douglas*. It is possible that the asylum was Balmes House, illustrated in Walford's *Old and New London*.

The poem in blank verse was, we learn in a subsequent letter, *The Grandame*, or possibly an autobiographical work of which *The Grandame* is the only portion that survived.

White was James White (1775-1820), an old Christ's Hospitaller, and a friend and almost exact contemporary of Lamb. White's immortality rests upon the character sketch of him in the *Elia* essay 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers.'

The sonnet *To my Sister* was printed, with slight alterations, by Lamb in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797, and again in *Lamb's Works*, 1818.

Coleridge's *Conciones ad Populum*; or, *Addresses to the People*, had been published at Bristol in November 1795.]

## 2. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun either on *Tuesday, 24th May*, or  
*Tuesday, 31st May 1796*. Postmark *1st June*.]

I am in such violent pain with the head ach that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the Joan of Arc, I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before tomorrow (Wednesday) morning. The following sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last Summer.

The lord of light shakes off his drowsyhed.<sup>1</sup>  
 Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty Sun,  
 And girds himself his mighty race to run.  
 Meantime, by truant love of rambling led,  
 I turn my back on thy detested walls,  
 Proud City, and thy sons I leave behind,  
 A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,  
 Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.  
 I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,  
 That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,  
 Of merriest days, of love and Islington,  
 Kindling anew the flames of past desire;  
 And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,  
 To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

The last line is a copy of Bowles's, 'to the green hamlet in the peaceful plain.' Your ears are not so very fastidious—many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my 1st sonnet that 'mock'd my step with many a lonely glade.'

<sup>1</sup> Drowsyhed I have met with I think in Spencer. 'Tis an old thing, but it rhymes with led & rhyming covers a multitude of licences.

When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,  
 Green winding walks, and pathways shady-sweet,  
 Oftimes would Anna seek the silent scene,  
 Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.  
 No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;  
 Her image only in these pleasant ways  
 Meets me self-wandring where in better days  
 I held free converse with my fair-hair'd maid.  
 I pass'd the little cottage, which she loved,  
 The cottage which did once my all contain:  
 It spake of days that ne'er must come again,  
 Spake to my heart and much my heart was moved.  
 'Now fair befall thee, gentle maid,' said I,  
 And from the cottage turn'd me, with a sigh.

The next retains a few lines from a sonnet of mine, which you once remarked had no 'body of thought' in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it.

A timid grace sits trembling in her Eye,  
 As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight,  
 Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,  
 That steeps in kind oblivious extacy  
 The care-craz'd mind, like some still melody;  
 Speaking most plain the thoughts which do possess  
 Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,  
 And innocent loves,<sup>1</sup> and maiden purity.  
 A look whereof might heal the cruel smart  
 Of changed friends, or fortune's wrongs unkind;  
 Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart  
 Of him, who hates his brethren of mankind.  
 Turned are those beams from me, who fondly yet  
 Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote 'Methinks how dainty sweet.'

We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,  
 The youngest and the loveliest far, I ween,  
 And INNOCENCE her name. The time has been,  
 We two did love each other's company;  
 Time was, we two had wept to have been apart.  
 But when, with shew of seeming good beguil'd,  
 I left the garb and manners of a child,  
 And my first love for man's society,  
 Defiling with the world my virgin heart,  
 My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,  
 And hid in deepest shades her awful head.

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<sup>1</sup> Cowley uses this phrase with a somewhat different meaning: I meant loves or relatives, friends, &c.

Beloved, who can tell me where Thou art,  
In what delicious Eden to be found,  
That I may seek thee the wide world around.

Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangour, these 2 lines to happiness

Nun sober and devout, where art thou fled  
To hide in shades thy meek contented head.

Lines eminently beautiful, but I do not remember having re'd 'em previously, for the credit of my 10th and 11th lines. Parnell has 2 lines (which probably suggested the *above*), to Contentment

Whither ah! whither art thou fled,  
To hide thy meek contented head.<sup>1</sup>

Cowley's exquisite Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey suggested the phrase of 'we two'

'Was there a tree that did not know  
The love betwixt us two?——'

So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse I am so dismally slow and steril of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few indepen[den]t unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems—for which I am very thankful. I have one more favour to beg of you, that you never mention Mr. May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-em-ists?

We have just learned, that my poor brother has had a sad accident: a large stone blown down by yesterday's high wind has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner—he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge, there are 10,000 objections against my paying you a visit at Bristol—it cannot be, else—but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibilities, that we may not be out of humour with present insipids. Should any thing bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen St. Holborn.

I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth, myself but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his 'teaching the young idea how to shoot'—knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me,—'he would teach him to shoot!'—Poor Le Grice! if wit alone

<sup>1</sup> An odd epithet for contentment in a poet so poetical as Parnell.



could entitle a man to respect, &c. He has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations; when I send White's book, I will add that.

I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. 'Between you two there should be peace,' tho' I must say I have borne him no good will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your Watchman. Very decent things. So much for to-night from your afflicted headacheey sorethroatey, humble Servant C. Lamb—Tuesday night——.

Of your Watchmen, the Review of Burke was the best prose. I augurd great things from the 1st number. There is some exquisite poetry interspersed. I have re-read the extract from the Religious musings and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favourable moment and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be any thing in it approach<sup>g</sup> to tumidity (which I meant not to infer in elaborate: I meant simply labor<sup>d</sup>) it is the Gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the Evils of existing society. Snakes, Lions, hyenas and behemoths, is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of the Simoom, of frenzy and ruin, of the whore of Babylon and the cry of the foul spirits disherited of Earth and the strange beatitude which the good man shall recognise in heaven—as well as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness—(I have unconsciously included every part of it) form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your 6th no.: 'this dark frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering Month'—they are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed up daisy you seem to have had in mind. Your complaint that [of] your readers some thought there was too much, some too little, original matter in your Nos., reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the Critic—'too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, Sir, there is too much incident.' I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel the 1st Slavonian Song. The expression in the 2d 'more happy to be unhappy in hell'—is it not very quaint? Accept my thanks in common with those of all who love good poetry for the Braes of Yarrow. I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in 'human flesh and sinews.' Coleridge, you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employ'd on his translation of the Italian &c. poems of •

Milton, for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge, to an idler like myself to write and receive letters are both very pleasant, but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do; for your loco-restive and all your idle propensities of course have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in but no parcel, yet this is Tuesday. Farewell then till to-morrow, for a niche and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way I hope you do not send your own only copy of Joan of Arc; I will in that case return it immediately.

Your parcel is come, you have been *lavish* of your presents. Wordsworth's poem I have hurried thro' not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I spoke of him above, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles, God send you thro' 'em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid! the very word is galling to the ears. I have read all your *Rel: Musings* with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remain<sup>g</sup> things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind 'the voice, the look' of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart, and to the ears of the bystanders. I rather wish you had left the monody on C. concluding as it did abruptly. It had more of unity.—The conclusion of your *R Musings* I fear will entitle you to the reproof of your Beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The very last words 'I exercise my young novice tho' in ministeries of heart-stirring song,' tho' not now new to me, cannot be enough admired. To speak politely, they are a well turned compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read Joan of Arc, &c. I have read your lines at the begin<sup>g</sup> of 2d book, they are worthy of Milton, but in my mind yield to your *Rel Mus<sup>g</sup>*. I shall read the whole carefully and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the *Musings*, that beginning 'My Pensive Sara' gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite—they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs. C. chequing your wild wandrings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than any thing to your good Lady; and your own self-reproof that follows delighted us.

'Tis a charming poem throughout. (You have well remarked that 'charming, admirable, exquisite' are words expressive of feelings, more than conveying of ideas, else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalizing.) I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spencer, &c. &c. &c. &c. I am glad you resume the Watchman—change the name, leave out all articles of News, and whatever things are peculiar to News Papers, and confine yourself to Ethics, verse, criticism, or, rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the Spectator, and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor, rely on my inclinations. Coleridge, in reading your *Rs Musings* I felt a transient superiority over you: I have seen Priestly. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honor him almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *sermons*, if you never read 'em.—You have doubtless read his books, illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his, in answer to Paine, there is a preface, given [? giving] an account of the Man and his services to Men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend,—well worth your reading.

Tuesday Eve.—Forgive my prolixity, which is yet too brief for all I could wish to say.—God give you comfort and all that are of your household.—Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs. C.

C. LAMB.

[The Hertfordshire sonnet was printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December 1797, and not reprinted by Lamb.

The sonnet that 'mock'd my step with many a lonely glade' is that beginning  
Was it some sweet device of Faery

which had been printed in Coleridge's *Poems*, 1796. The second, third, and fourth of the sonnets that are copied in this letter were printed in the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. Anna is generally supposed to be Ann Simmons, referred to in the previous note.

Concerning 'Flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-em-ists,' Canon Ainger has the following interesting note: "'Flocci, nauci' is the beginning of a rule in the old Latin grammars, containing a list of words signifying 'of no account,' *flocus* being a lock of wool, and *naucus* a trifle. Lamb was recalling a sentence in one of Shenstone's letters: 'I loved him for nothing so much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.'" But 'Pantisocratists' was, of course, the word that Lamb was shadowing. Pantisocracy, however—the new order of common living and high thinking, to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna by Coleridge, Southey, Favell, Burnett, and others—was already dead.

William Cumberland Cruikshank, the anatomist, who attended Lamb's brother, had attended Dr. Johnson in his last illness.

Le Grice's pamphlet was *A General Theorem for A \*\*\*\*\* Coll. Declamation, with copious notes by Gronovius*, 1796—Le Grice having himself supplied a prize declamation in 1794.

Southey and Coleridge had been on somewhat strained terms for some time;

possibly, as I have said in a previous note, owing to Southey's abandonment of Utopian fervour, which anticipated Coleridge's by some months. Also, to marry sisters does not always lead to serenity. The spiriting away of Coleridge had been effected by Southey in January 1795, when he found Coleridge at the 'Angel' in Butcher Hall Street, and bore him back to Bristol and the forlorn Sara Fricker, and away from Lamb, journalism, and egg-hot.

Moschus, was, as we have seen, Robert Lovell. No. V of the *Watchman* contained sonnets by him.

Cowper's recovery was only partial; and he was seldom rightly himself after 1793. The edition of Milton had been begun about 1790. It was never finished as originally intended; but Fuseli completed forty pictures, which were exhibited in 1799. An edition of Cowper's translations, with designs by Flaxman, was published in 1808, and of Cowper's complete Milton in 1810.

Wordsworth. This is the first mention of the great poet, with whom later Lamb was to become friendly. At that time Wordsworth was twenty-six, only five years Lamb's senior. His French revolutionary period over, he had settled, in 1795, with his sister Dorothy, at Racedown, on the borders of Dorset and Somerset, where, in June 1797, Coleridge, whom he had first met a year or so before, probably at Bristol, visited him. Later in the year the Wordsworths, in order to be nearer Coleridge, moved to Alfoxden, three miles from Nether Stowey, and it was there that the partnership, which was in 1798 to produce *Lyrical Ballads*, began. Wordsworth's poem would be *Guilt and Sorrow*, of which a portion was printed in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and the whole published in 1842.

Coleridge's *Monody on Chatterton*, the first piece in his *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796, had been written originally at Christ's Hospital, 1790; it continued to be much altered before the final version.

The two lines from *Religious Musings* are not the last, but the beginning of the last passage.

Coleridge contributed between three and four hundred lines to book ii of Southey's *Joan of Arc*, as we shall see later. The poem beginning 'My pensive Sara' was Effusion 35, afterwards called *The Eolian Harp*, and the lines to which Lamb refers are these, following upon Coleridge's description of how flitting phantasies traverse his indolent and passive brain:

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof  
Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts  
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,  
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.

The plan to resume the *Watchman* came to nothing.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), the theologian, at this time the object of Lamb's adoration, was one of the fathers of Unitarianism, a creed in which Lamb had been brought up under the influence of his Aunt Hetty.]

### 3. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun *Wednesday, 8th June*. Dated on address:  
'*Friday, 10th June, 1796.*']

With Joan of Arc I have been delighted, amazed. I had not presumed to expect any thing of such excellence from Southey. Why the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live

in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns and Bowles, Cowper and——fill up the blank how you please, I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26 'Fierce and terrible Benevolence!' is a phrase full of grandeur and originality. The whole context made me feel *possess'd*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, 'it is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely fibred human frame' and what follows pleased me mightily. In the 2d Book the first forty lines, in particular, are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed the whole vision of the palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your simile of the Laplander 'by Niemi's lake Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone Of Solfar Kapper'—will bear comparison with any in Milton for fullness of circumstance and lofty-pacedness of Versification. Southey's similes, tho' many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books the simile of the Oak in the Storm occurs I think four times! To return, the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why Monarchs take delight in War. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking it is correct. Page 98 'Dead is the Douglas, cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan' &c are of kindred excellence with Gray's 'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue' &c. How famously the Maid baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irrefragable, 'with all their trumpery!' 126 page, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309 in the heat of the battle had better been omitted, they are not very striking and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the Banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in Dreams 'all things are that seem' is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed—a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dream'd of. Page 315, I need only mention those lines ending with 'She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart'!!! They are good imitative lines 'he toild and toild, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never ending woe.' 347 page, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with Creating and Preserving love) is very confused and sickens me with a load of useless

personifications. Else that 9th Book is the finest in the volume, an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible,—I have never read either, even in translation, but such as I conceive to be the manner of Dante and Ariosto. The 10th book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finish'd, I was astonish'd at the infrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too little in Battle—Dunois, perhaps, the same—Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos abounding throughout the poem—passages which the author of 'Crazy Kate' might have written. Has not Master Southey spoke very slightly in his preface and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer?—what makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives 'did' and 'does?' they have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton. I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living Poets besides. What says Coleridge? The 'Monody on Henderson' is *immensely good*; the rest of that little volume is *readable and above mediocrity*. I proceed to a more pleasant task,—pleasant because the poems are yours, pleasant because you impose the task on me, and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me to sit in judgment upon your rhimes. First tho', let me thank you again and again in my own and my sister's name for your invitations. Nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my Brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow, he is very feverish and light headed, but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favorable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation. God send, not. We are necessarily confined with him the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you. Thank you for your frequent letters, you are the only correspondent and I might add the only friend I have in the world. I go no where and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as tho' it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters. Do not, however, burthen yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea, thence must wait upon my brother, so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell—Wednesday.

Thursday. I will first notice what is new to me. 13th page. 'The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul' is a nervous line, and the 6 first lines of page 14 are very pretty. The 21st effusion is a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spencer is very sweet, particularly at the close. The 35th effusion is most exquisite—that line in particular, 'And tranquil muse upon tranquillity.' It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd—a modern one I would be understood to mean—a Dametas; one that keeps other people's sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally, it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has however great merit. In your 4th Epistle that is an exquisite paragraph and fancy-full of 'A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow' &c. &c. 'Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmine bowers' is a sweet line and so are the 3 next. The concluding simile is far-fetch'd. 'Tempest-honord' is a quaintish phrase. Of the Monody on H., I will here only notice these lines, as superlatively excellent. That energetic one, 'Shall I not praise thee, Scholar, Christian, friend,' like to that beautiful climax of Shakspeare 'King, Hamlet, Royal Dane, Father.' 'Yet memory turns from little men to thee!' 'and sported careless round their fellow child.' The whole, I repeat it, is immensely good. Yours is a Poetical family. I was much surpriz'd and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the 5th Epistle. I dare not *criticise* the Relig Musings, I like not to *select* any part where all is excellent. I can only admire; and thank you for it in the name of a Christian as well as a Lover of good Poetry. Only let me ask, is not that thought and those words in Young, 'Stands in the Sun?' or is it only such as Young in one of his *better moments* might have writ? 'Believe, thou, O my Soul, Life is a vision, shadowy of truth, And vice and anguish and the wormy grave, Shapes of a dream!' I thank you for these lines, in the name of a Necessarian, and for what follows in next paragraph in the name of a child of fancy. After all you can[not] nor ever will write any thing, with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to Town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed Hope. You had 'many an holy lay, that mourning, soothed the mourner on his way.' I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the sense. When I read in your little volume, your 19th Effusion, or the 28th or 29th, or what you call the 'Sigh,' I think I hear *you* again. I image to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we have sat together thro' the winter nights, beguiling

the cares of life with Poesy. When you left London, I felt a dismal void in my heart, I found myself cut off at one and the same time from two most dear to me. 'How blest with Ye the Path could I have trod of Quiet life.' In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies, that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence, the tide of melancholy rushd in again, and did its worst Mischief by overwhelming my Reason. I have recoverd. But feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind, but habits are strong things, and my religious fervors are confined alas to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion—A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it. I will not be very troublesome. At some future time I will amuse you with an account as full as my memory will permit of the strange turn my phrensy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of Envy. For while it lasted I had many many hours of pure happiness. Dream not Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of Fancy, till you have gone mad. All now seems to me vapid; comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression.

Your monody is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures. What I am going to propose would make it more compress'd and I think more energetic, tho' I am sensible at the expence of many beautiful lines. Let it begin 'Is this the land of song-ennobled line,' and proceed to 'Otway's famish'd form.' Then 'thee Chatterton,' to 'blaze of Seraphim.' Then 'clad in nature's rich array,' to 'orient day'; then 'but soon the scathing lightning,' to 'blighted land.' Then 'Sublime of thought' to 'his bosom glows.' Then 'but soon upon *his* poor unsheltered head Did Penury her sickly Mildew shed, and soon are fled the charms of vernal Grace, and Joy's wild gleams that lightend o'er his face!' Then 'Youth of tumultuous soul' to 'sigh' as before. The rest may all stand down to 'gaze upon the waves below.' What follows now may come next, as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are indeed in themselves very sweet 'And we at sober eve would round thee throng, Hanging enraptured on thy stately song'—in particular perhaps. If I am obscure you may understand me by counting lines. I have proposed omitting 24 lines. I feel that thus compress it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me, for who shall go about to bring opinions to the Bed of Procrustes and introduce among the Sons of Men a monotony of identical feelings. I only propose with diffidence. Reject, you, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the color



of a coat or the pattern of a buckle where our fancies differ'd. The lines 'Friend to the friendless' &c. which you may think 'rudely disbranched' from the Chatterton will patch in with the Man of Ross, where they were once quite at Home, with 2 more which I recollect 'and o'er the dowried virgin's snowy cheek bad bridal love suffuse his blushes meek!' very beautiful. The Pixies is a perfect thing, and so are the lines on the spring, page 28. The Epitaph on an Infant, like a Jack of lanthorn, has danced about (or like Dr. Forster's scholars) out of the Morn Chron into the Watchman, and thence back into your Collection. It is very pretty, and you seem to think so, but, may be o'er looked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deem'd Sonnets of unrivalled use that way, but your epitaphs, I find, are the more diffuse. Edmund still holds its place among your best verses. 'Ah! fair delights' to 'roses round' in your Poem called Absence recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which *you recited it*. I will not notice in this tedious (to you) manner verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestly, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the 19th Effusion. It would have better ended with 'agony of care.' The last 2 lines are obvious and unnecessary and you need not now make 14 lines of it, now it is rechristend from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the 20 Effusion. 'Tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my Sister was so ill. I had lost the Copy, and I felt not a little proud at seeing my name in your verse. The complaint of Ninathoma (1st stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation, of Ossian I ever saw—your restless gale excepted. 'To an infant' is most sweet—is not 'foodful,' tho', very harsh! would not 'dulcet' fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In Edmund, 'Frenzy fierce-eyed child,' is not so well as frantic—tho' that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than squatting. In the Man of Ross it *was* a better line thus 'If 'neath this roof thy wine-chear'd moments pass' than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding 5 lines of Kosciusko: call it any thing you will but sublime. In my 12th Effusion I had rather have seen what I wrote myself, tho' they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines 'On rose-leaf'd beds amid your faery bowers,' &c.—I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the 13th 'How reason reel'd,' &c.—are good lines but must spoil the whole with ME who know it is only a fiction of yours and that the rude dashings did in fact NOT ROCK me to REPOSE. I grant the same objection applies not to the former sonnet, but still I love my own

feelings. They are dear to memory, tho' they now and then wake a sigh or a tear. 'Thinking on divers things foredone,' I charge you, Col., spare my ewe lambs, and tho' a Gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem (I should have no objection to borrow 500 and without acknowledging) still in a Sonnet—a personal poem—I do not 'ask my friend the aiding verse.' I would not wrong your feelings by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting 'em) in such personal poems as 'Thou bleedest my poor heart'—'od so, I am catch'd, I have already done it—but that simile I propose abridging would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the 28th however, and in the 'Sigh' and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poems, '*propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridg-andum,*' just what you will with it—but spare my EWE LAMBS! That to Mrs. Siddons now you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it. But I say unto you again, Col., spare my EWE LAMBS. I must confess were they mine I should omit, in *Editione secundâ*, Effusions 2-3, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of Religious Musings, 5-7, half of the 8th, that written in early Youth, as far as 'Thousand eyes,'—tho' I part not unreluctantly with that lively line 'Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes' and one or 2 more just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called 'Recollection' in the 5th No. of the Watchman, better I think than the remainder of this poem, tho' not differing materially. As the poem now stands it looks altogether confused. And do not omit those lines upon the 'early blossom,' in your 6th No. of the Watchman, and I would omit the 10th Effusion—or what would do better, alter and improve the last 4 lines. In fact, I suppose if they were mine I should *not* omit 'em. But your verse is for the most part so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance and often, I fear, ill founded criticisms, and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ach with my long letter. But I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you.

You did not tell me whether I was to include the *Conciones ad Populum* in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime, and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse,—if you have nothing else to do. Allen I am sorry to say is a *confirmed* Atheist. Stodart, or Stothard, a cold hearted well bred conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good. His wife has several daughters (one of 'em as old as himself). Surely there is something unnatural in such a marriage. How I sympathise with you on the dull

duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned Evans and the Prosodist. I shall however wait impatiently for the articles in the Crit. Rev., next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you. Coleridge, I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snugify you for life. 'Tis a selfish but natural wish for me, cast as I am 'on life's wide plain, friend-less.' Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see, by his last Elegy (written at Bath), you are near neighbours. 'And I can think I can see the groves again—was it the voice of thee—Twas not the voice of thee, my buried friend—who dries with her dark locks the tender tear'—are touches as true to nature as any in his other Elegy, written at the hot wells, about poor Russell, &c.—You are doubtless acquainted with it.—Thursday.

I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my Sonnet to Innocence. To men whose hearts are not quite deadened by their commerce with the world, Innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweeten'd, tho', with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with. Yet I chuse to retain the word 'lunar'—indulge a 'lunatic' in his loyalty to his mistress the moon. I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burn'd for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure) is 'She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven.' A note explains by forger her right hand with which she forged or coined the base metal! For pathos read bathos. You have put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your Religious Musings. I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you—it is 'Izaak Walton's Complete Angler!' All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer in less than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July—tho' if you get any how *settled* before then pray let me know it immediately—'twould give me such satisfaction. Concerning the unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage—is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for Genius.

Nothing more occurs just now, so I will leave you in mercy one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travell'd thro'. God love you, Coleridge, and prosper you thro' life, tho' mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol or at Nottingham or any where but London. Our loves to Mrs. C——

C. L.

[Southey's *Joan of Arc*, with contributions to book ii by Coleridge, had been published in quarto by Cottle.

Dr. Forster (Faustus) was the hero of the nursery rhyme, whose scholars danced out of England into France, and Spain, and back again.

Godwin. William Godwin, whom Lamb is now treating rather contemptuously, but afterwards came to know and moderately to like, was forty years of age, and well known for his *Political Justice*, published in 1793, and for his free-thinking views, acquired after, or during, a period as a minister of the gospel. It was probably through Godwin that Lamb came to know several of his friends, notably Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist. It was in 1797 that Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft, who died in giving birth, in the same year, to their daughter Mary, afterwards Shelley's wife, and a friend of Lamb's later years.

It was Allen's wife, not Stoddart's, who had a grown-up daughter.

*Ned Evans* was a novel in four volumes, published in 1796, an imitation of *Tom Jones*, which presumably Coleridge was reviewing for the *Critical Review*, although there is no mention of it in *A Wiltshire Parson and his Friends*, the parson being W. L. Bowles, by Garland Greever, 1926.

Young W. Evans is said by the late Dykes Campbell, the first authority of his time on Coleridge, to have been the only son of the Mrs. Evans who befriended Coleridge when he was at Christ's Hospital, the mother of his first love, Mary Evans. Evans was at school with Coleridge and Lamb. We shall meet with him again (see page 277).

William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850), the sonneteer, who had exerted so powerful a poetical influence on Coleridge's mind, was at this time rector of Cricklade in Wiltshire (1792-7), but had been ill at Bath. The elegy in question was *Elegiac Stanzas written during sickness at Bath, December 1795*. The lines quoted by Lamb are respectively in the sixth, fourth, fifth, and nineteenth stanzas.

Sophia Pringle. I have not found the verses.

The reference to the Unitarian chapel bears probably upon an offer of a pulpit to Coleridge. The tutorship was probably that offered to Coleridge by Mrs. Evans of Darley Hall (no relation to Mary Evans), who wished him to reach her sons. Neither project was carried through.]

#### 4. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

(Apparently a continuation of a letter the first part of which is missing)

[Begun] Monday Night [13th June 1796].

Unfurnished at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely

coincide with your comments on 'Joan of Arc,' and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the 1st book and could prefer the 9th: not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former, but the latter caught me with its glare of magic,—the former, however, left a more pleasing general recollection in my mind. Let me add, the 1st book was the favourite of my sister—and I now, with Joan, often 'think on Domremi and the fields of Arc.' I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey's merits too much by number, weight, and measure. I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is 'disbranched' from one of your embryo 'hymns.' When they are mature of birth (were I you) I should print 'em in one separate volume, with 'Religious Musings' and your part of the 'Joan of Arc.' Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus), I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then at Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September for a week or fortnight; before that time, office business puts an absolute veto on my coming.

And if a sigh that speaks regret of happier times appear,

A glimpse of joy that we have met shall shine and dry the tear.

Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerably complete ones I have writ out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not writ fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived housekeeper in a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life—that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness—and for many years before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast which she bore with true Christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling—and if she had a failing, 'twas that she respected her master's family too much, not revered her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect 'em if I finish at all,—and if I do, Biggs shall print 'em in a more economical way than you yours, for (Sonnets and all) they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wire-drawn.

Tuesday Evening, June 14, 1796.

I am not quite satisfied now with the Chatterton, and with your leave will try my hand at it again. A master joiner, you know, may leave a cabinet to be finished by his journeyman when his own hands are full. To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wife for a Month;' 'tis the conclusion of a description of a sea-fight;—'The game of *death* was never played so nobly; the meagre thief grew wanton in his mischiefs, and his shrunk hollow eyes smiled on his ruins.' There is fancy in these of a lower order from 'Bonduca;'—'Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls creep into tods of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly.' Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract book I keep, which is full of quotations from B. and F. in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At a hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called 'A Very Woman.' The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the lines, for I write 'em as prose. 'Not far from where my father lives, a lady, a neighbour by, blest with as great a *beauty* as nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blest the house a thousand times she *dwelt in*. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness*; in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and served; long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her*; with all the duty of my soul I SERVED HER.' 'Then she must love.' 'She did, but never me: she could not *love me*; she would not love, she hated,—more, she *scorn'd me*; and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me'—'What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her* (shame to her most unworthy mind,) to fools, to girls, to fiddlers and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me.' One more passage strikes my eye from B. and F.'s 'Palamon and Arcite.' One of 'em complains in prison: 'This is all our world; we shall know nothing here but one another, hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes; the vine shall grow, but we shall never see it,' &c. Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Collins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poets

after Shakspeare yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels; but you are most probably as well acquainted with his writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to expose my barrenness of matter. Southey in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and F. in his [their] 'Maid's Tragedy' and some parts of 'Philaster' in particular, and elsewhere occasionally; and perhaps by Cowper in his 'Crazy Kate,' and in parts of his translation, such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very Homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad—the lines ending with 'Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!'

I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As curious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands, is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally 'amiable delusions of the fancy,' he proposed to render 'the fair frauds of the imagination!' I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright. The book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalising epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end.

*Tuesday Night.*

I have been drinking egg-hot and smoking Oronooko (associated circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the Salutation); my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?

Our broken friendships we deplore,  
And loves of youth that are no more;  
No after friendships e'er can raise  
Th' endearments of our early days,  
And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,  
As when we first began to love.

I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it; but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

Then up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink,  
Craigdoroch, thou 'lt soar when creation shall sink.

BURNS.

Thursday [16th June 1796].

I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends. In the words of Terence, a little altered, 'Tædet me hujus quotidiani mundi.' I am heartily sick of the every-day scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs. C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you, and drinking egg-hot in some little smoky room in a pot-house, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room, and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES LAMB.

[Coleridge's image of melancholy will be found in the lines *Melancholy—a fragment*. It was published in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817, and in a note Coleridge said that the verses were printed in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1794. They were really printed in the *Morning Post*, 12th December 1797. Coleridge had probably sent them to Lamb in MS. The 'hymns' came to nothing.

'The following lines.' Lamb's poem *The Grandame* was presumably included in this letter. Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, died 31st July 1792, aged seventy-nine, and was buried in Widford churchyard. She had been for many years housekeeper in the Plumer family at Blakesware. On William Plumer's moving to Gilston, a neighbouring seat, in 1767, she had sole charge of the Blakesware mansion, where her grandchildren used to visit her. Compare Lamb's *Elia* essays 'Blakesmoor in H—shute' and 'Dream-Children.']

#### 5. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun on Wednesday, 29th June.  
P.M. 1st July 1796.]

The first moment I can come I will, but my hopes of coming yet a while yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial as I shall so easily by your direction find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bed fellow. She thanks you tho' and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines introductory to your poem on Self run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your Dactyls? They are what you would call good per se, but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked. I mark with figures the lines parodied.



4. Sôrely your Dáctyls do drág along lirríp-footed.
5. Sád is the méasure that hángs a clod róund 'em so,
6. Méagre, and lánguid, procláiming its wrétchedness.
1. Wéary, unsátisfied, nót little síck of 'em,
11. Córd is my tíred heart, I have no chárity.
2. Páinfully trávv'ling thus óver the rúgged road.
7. Ó begone, Méasure, half Látin, half Énglish, then.
12. Dísmal your Dáctyls are, Gód help ye, rýmng Ones.

I *possibly* may not come this fortnight—therefore all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two. But young Savory of my office is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again. Had the knave gone sick and died and putrefied at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort, but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when in books of Criticism, where common place quotation is heaped upon quotation. I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or B. and Fl, men with whom succeeding Dramatic Writers (Otway alone excepted) can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

Thursday.—Mrs. C. can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme, but she must take my acknowledgment at present in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand whether I can come or no damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always glad of her company, but could dispense with the visitor she brings with her, her younger sister, Fear, a white-liver'd, lilly-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussey, that hangs like a green girl at her sister's apronstrings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess, so I changed them to what you bid me and left 'em at Perry's. I think 'em altogether good, and do not see why you were sollicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's *Chronicle*, for your verses on Horne Took. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers t'other day, but I think unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends' meeting was I suppose a dinner of CONDOLENCE. I am not

sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysic. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry—I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any part of your epistles, least of all an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both those worthy gentlemen are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive and in better cue to write, so good bye at present.

Friday Evening.—That execrable aristocrat and knave Richardson has given me an absolute refusal of leave! The *poor man* cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, 'this dread dependance on the low bred mind?' Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content— Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both.

LAMB.

Savory did return, but there are 2 or 3 more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I will never commit my peace of mind by depending on such a wretch for a favor in future, so shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, Cartwright, furnished him with the objections.

C. LAMB.

[The Dactyls were Coleridge's only in the third stanza; the remainder were Southey's. The poem is known as *The Soldier's Wife*, printed in Southey's *Poems*, 1797. Later Southey revised the verses. The *Anti-Jacobin* had a parody of them.

Young Savory was probably a relative of Hester Savory, whom we shall meet later. He entered the East India House on the same day that Lamb did.

We do not know what were the lines from Wither which Coleridge had sent to Lamb. Lamb himself eventually did much to bring Wither and the elder bards into more general fame—in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, and in the essay 'On the Poetical Works of George Wither,' in the *Works*, 1818.

Stupid Knox was Vicesimus Knox (1752-1821), the editor of *Elegant Extracts* in many forms.

'Her . . . sweet little poem.' Sara Coleridge's verses no longer exist. See Lamb's next letter for his poetical reply.

Dyer was George Dyer (1755-1841), an old Christ's Hospitaller (but before Lamb and Coleridge's time) of whom we shall see much—Lamb's famous 'G. D.'

William Richardson was Accountant-General of the East India House at that time; Charles Cartwright, his Deputy.]

## 6. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*The 5th July, 1796.*

## TO SARA AND HER SAMUEL

Was it so hard a thing? I did but ask  
 A fleeting holy day. One little week,  
 Or haply two, had bounded my request.

What if the jaded Steer, who all day long  
 Had borne the heat and labour of the plough,  
 When Evening came and her sweet cooling hour,  
 Should seek to trespass on a neighbour copse,  
 Where greener herbage waved, or clearer streams  
 Invited him to slake his burning thirst?  
 That Man were crabbed, who should say him Nay:  
 That Man were churlish, who should drive him thence!  
 A blessing light upon your heads, ye good,  
 Ye hospitable pair. I may not come,  
 To catch on Clifden's heights the summer gale:  
 I may not come, a pilgrim, to the 'Vales  
 Where Avon winds,' to taste th' inspiring waves  
 Which Shakespere drank, our British Helicon:  
 Or, with mine eye intent on Redcliffe towers,  
 To drop a tear for that Mysterious youth,  
 Cruelly slighted, who to London Walls,  
 In evil hour, shap'd his disastrous course.

Complaints, begone; begone, ill-omen'd thoughts—  
 For yet again, and lo! from Avon banks  
 Another 'Minstrel' cometh! Youth beloved,  
 God and good angels guide thee on thy way,  
 And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.

C. L.

## 7. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*the 6th July [P.M. 7th July, 1796].*

Substitute in room of that last confused & incorrect Paragraph,  
 following the words 'disastrous course,' these lines

Vide  
3rd page of  
this epistle.

no

{ With better hopes, I trust, from Avon's vales  
{ This other 'minstrel' cometh. Youth endear'd,  
{ God & good Angels guide thee on thy road,  
{ And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.

[*Lamb has crossed through the above lines.*]

Let us prose.

What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington (possibly) you would not like, to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks. St. George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity to the Bench. Chuse! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles. Yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the Chron: must be a very comfortable & secure living for a man. But should not you read French, or do you? & can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis call'd, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels, or could say, on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness?—White's 'Letters' are near publication. Could you review 'em, or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the Crit: Rev:? His frontispiece is a good conceit: Sir John learning to dance, to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, etc., from [for] the upper half; & modern pantaloons, with shoes, etc., of the 18th century, from [for] the lower half—and the whole work is full of goodly quips & rare fancies, 'all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity'—much superior to Dr. Kenrick's Falstaff's Wedding, which you may have seen. Allen sometimes laughs at Superstition, & Religion, & the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital. White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled & scrupled about it, and at last (to use his own words) 'tampered' with Godwin to know whether the thing was honest or not. Godwin said nay to it, & Allen rejected the living! Could the blindest Poor Papish have bowed more servilely to his Priest or Casuist? Why sleep the Watchman's answers to that Godwin? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep, those last lines I sent you. Do that, & read these for your pains:—

#### TO THE POET COWPER

Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!  
Thine was the sorest malady of all;  
And I am sad to think that it should light  
Upon thy worthy head! But thou art heal'd,

And thou art yet, we trust, the destin'd man,  
 Born to reanimate the Lyre, whose chords  
 Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long,  
 To the immortal sounding of whose strings  
 Did Milton frame the stately-paced verse;  
 Among whose wires with lighter finger playing,  
 Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,  
 The Lady Muses' dearest darling child,  
 Elicited the defftest tunes yet heard  
 In Hall or Bower, taking the delicate Ear  
 Of Sydney, & his peerless Maiden Queen.

Thou, then, take up the mighty Epic strain,  
 Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest & the best.

1796

I have read your climax of praises in those 3 reviews. These mighty spouters-out of panegyric waters have, 2 of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me! & the waters are cooling & refreshing. Prosaically, the Monthly Reviewers have made indeed a large article of it, & done you justice. The Critical have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, & notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the 'Religious Musings.' I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks & the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *expressed* above, (perhaps scarcely just), but the poor Gentleman has just recovered from his Lunacy, & that begets pity, & pity love, and love admiration, & then it goes hand with People but they lie! Have you read the Ballad called 'Leonora,' in the second Number of the 'Monthly Magazine'? If you have!!!!!!!!!!!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Berger), in the 3d No., of scarce inferior merit; & (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the 5th No. For your Dactyls I am sorry you are so sore about 'em—a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself 'half anger, half agony' if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote—you have written much.

For the alterations in those lines, let 'em run thus:

I may not come a pilgrim, to the Banks  
 of *Avon, lucid stream*, to taste the wave (inspiring wave) was too  
 which Shakspeare drank, our British Helicon; common place.  
 or with mine eye, &c., &c.  
 To muse, in tears, on that mysterious Youth, &c. (better than 'drop a tear')

Then the last paragraph alter thus

Complaint begone, begone unkind reproof,  
Take up, my song, take up a merrier strain,  
For yet again, & lo! from Avon's vales,  
Another minstrel cometh! youth *endeared*,  
God & good angels &c., as before.

better refer to my own  
'complaint' solely than half  
to that and half to Chatterton  
as in your copy, which  
creates a confusion—'ominous  
fears' &c.

Have a care, good Master poet, of the Statute de Contumelia. What do you mean by calling Madame Mara harlot & naughty things? The goodness of the verse would not save you in a court of Justice. But are you really coming to town?

Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, & inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr. Chambers living—this Mr. Chambers he said had been the making of a friend's fortune who wished to make some return for it. He went away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs. Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, & all that survives, of Mr. Chambers—& a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, & has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr. Pember (for that was the gentleman's friend's name), he is an attorney, & lives at Bristol. Find him out, & acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, & offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs. Reynolds, if he chuses to make her a present. She is in very distress circumstances. Mr. Pember, attorney, Bristol—Mr. Chambers lived in the Temple. Mrs. Reynolds, his daughter, was my school-mistress &c. is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again—I have not further to add—Our loves to Sara.

Thursday.

C. LAMB.

[The passage at the beginning, before 'Let us prose,' together with the later passages in the same manner, refers to the poem in the preceding letter which in slightly different form is printed in editions of Lamb as *Lines to Sara and her Samuel*. To complete the sense of the letter one should compare the text of the poem in Lamb's *Works*.

Coleridge had just received a suggestion, through Dr. Beddoes of Bristol, that he should replace Grey, the late co-editor (with James Perry), of the *Morning Chronicle*. It came to nothing; but Coleridge had told Lamb and had asked him to look out a house in town for him.

'All deftly masqued.' From Coleridge's *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*.

Dr. Kenrick's *Falstaff's Wedding*, 1760, was a continuation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.

The lines to Cowper were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December 1796.

Coleridge's *Poems* were reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, June 1796, with a reference to Lamb as 'a friend,' and calling his contribution 'of no inferior

merit.' The *Critical Review* for the same month said of Lamb's effusions: 'These are very beautiful.'

Mrs. Reynolds. Lamb's old schoolmistress and later his pensioner.

Between this and the next letter came, in all probability, a number of letters to Coleridge which have been lost. It is incredible that Lamb kept silence, at this period, for eleven weeks.]

## 8. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 27th September 1796.]

My dearest friend—White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Bluecoat school has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write,—as religious a letter as possible—but no mention of what is gone and done with—with me the former things are passed away, and I have something more to do than [than] to feel —

God almighty

have us all in  
his keeping.—

C. LAMB.

mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you, you [your] own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife.—You look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God almighty love you and all of us—

[The following is the report of the inquest upon Mrs. Lamb which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* for 26th September 1796. The tragedy had occurred on Thursday, 22nd September:

On Friday afternoon the Coroner and a respectable Jury sat on the body of a Lady in the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared by the evidence

adduced, that while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case knife laying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room; on the eager calls of her helpless infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and with loud shrieks approached her parent.

The child by her cries quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late—the dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the venerable old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.

For a few days prior to this the family had observed some symptoms of insanity in her which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening, that her brother early the next morning went in quest of Dr. Pitcairn—had that gentleman been met with, the fatal catastrophe had, in all probability, been prevented.

It seems the young Lady had been once before, in her earlier years, deranged from the harassing fatigues of too much business.—As her carriage towards her mother was ever affectionate in the extreme, it is believed that to the increased attentiveness, which her parents' infirmities called for by day and night, is to be attributed the present insanity of this ill-fated young woman.

It has been stated in some of the Morning Papers, that she has an insane brother also in confinement—this is without foundation.

The Jury of course brought in their Verdict, *Lunacy*.

In the *Whitehall Evening Post* the first part of the account is the same, but the end is as follows:

The above unfortunate young person is a Miss Lamb, a mantua-maker, in Little Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. She has been, since, removed to Islington mad-house.

Mr. Norris of the Blue-Coat School was Richard Norris junior.

The reference to the poetry and Coleridge's publication of it shows that Lamb had already been invited to contribute to the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*. The words 'and never' in the original have a line through them which might mean erasure, but, I think, does not.

'Your own judgment . . .' Mrs. Coleridge had just become a mother: David Hartley Coleridge was born on 19th September.

This was Coleridge's reply to Lamb's letter, as given in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*:

[28th September 1796.]

Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter; I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms, like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy, that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken



with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to 'his God and your God,' the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror, by the glories of God manifest, and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man, called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God; we cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ. And they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fullness of faith, 'Father, thy will be done.'

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here—no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings—you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair—you are a temporary sharer in human miseries, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain, your affectionate,

S. T. COLERIDGE.]

#### 9. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 3rd October 1796.]

My dearest friend, your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments to our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind, and impressive (as it must be to the end of life) but temper'd with religious resignation, and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which in this early stage knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a Mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her this morning calm and serene, far very very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind, and religious principle, to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity.

God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected, and calm; even on the dreadful day and in the midst of the terrible scene I preserved a tranquillity, which bystanders may have construed into indifference, a tranquillity not of despair; is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favorable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret; on that first evening my Aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying,—my father, with his poor forehead plaistered over from a wound he had received from a daughter dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly,—my mother a dead and murder'd corpse in the next room—yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense, had endeavored after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the 'ignorant present time,' and this kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me, for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or 2 after the fatal ONE, we drest for dinner a tongue, which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down a feeling like remorse struck me,—this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away—a thought occurred and relieved me,—if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs, I must rise above such weaknesses.—I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, tho', too far. On the very 2d day (I date from the day of horrors) as is usual in such cases there were a matter of 20 people I do think supping in our room. They prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry! in the room,—some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from Interest; I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room, the very next room, a mother who thro' life wished nothing but her children's welfare—indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind in an agony of emotion,—I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice who was then in town was with me the first 3 or 4 days, and was as a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father. Talk'd with him, read to him, play'd at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards, as tho' nothing had happened, while the Coroner's Inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr. Norris of Christ Hospital has been as a father to me, Mrs. Norris as a mother; tho' we had few claims on them. A Gentleman, brother to my Godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds,—and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old Lady, a cousin of my father and Aunt's, a Gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my Aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days.

My Aunt is recover'd and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going,—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my Father for her board) wholly and solely to my Sister's use. Reckoning this we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid servant to look after him, when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 (rather) a year, out of which we can spare 50 or 60 at least for Mary, while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good Lady of the mad house, and her daughter, an elegant sweet behaved young Lady, love her and are taken with her amazingly, and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much.—Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life: that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bedlam thought it likely 'here it may be my fate to end my days—' conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A Legacy of £100, which my father will have at Xmas, and this 20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house will much more than set us Clear;—if my father, an old servant maid, and I, can't live and live comfortably on £130 or £120 a year we ought to burn by slow fires, and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavourable

impression on your mind respecting my Brother. Since this has happened he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind,—he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way,—and I know his language is already, ‘Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to,’ &c &c and in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good, but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father’s monies in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The Lady at this mad house assures me that I may dismiss immediately both Doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally an opening draught or so for a while, and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself for £50 or guineas a year—the outside would be 60—You know by œconomy how much more, even, I shall be able to spare for her comforts.

She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients, and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly, and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness—I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear dearest soul, in a future letter for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking) she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable; God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind.

LAMB.

Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both!

I will write again very soon. Do you write directly.

These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme the very opposite to Despair; I was in danger of making myself too happy; your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning;

I hope (for Mary I can answer) but I hope that I shall thro' life never have less recollection nor a fainter impression of what has happened than I have now; 'tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious thro' life; by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty.

Send me word, how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was and will be an inestimable treasure to me; you have a view of what my situation demands of me like my own view; and I trust a just one.

[A word on Lamb's salary might, perhaps, be fitting here. For the first three years, from joining the East India House on 5th April 1792, he received nothing official, but an annual gratuity of £30 was made to him. This probationary period over, he was given £40 for the year 1795-6. This, however, was raised to £70 in 1796 and there were means of adding to it a little, by extra work and by a small holiday grant. In 1797 it was £80, in 1799 £90, and from that time until 1814 it rose by £10 in every second year.

Samuel Le Grice was the younger brother of Valentine Le Grice. Both were at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and Coleridge and are mentioned in the *Elia* essay on the school. Sam Le Grice afterwards had a commission in the 60th Foot, and died in Jamaica in 1802, as we shall see.]

## 10. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 17th October 1796.]

My dearest friend, I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you, a stubborn irresistible concurrence of events? or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again, and your fortunes are an *ignis fatuus* that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock, then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's whose son's tutor you were likely to be, and would to God the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last in peace and comfort to the 'life and labors of a cottager.' You see from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed; I should ill deserve God's blessings, which since the late terrible event have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness,—Mary continues serene and chearful,—I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me, for, tho' I see her almost every day yet we delight to write to one another (for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house), I have not the letter by me but

will quote from memory what she wrote in i. 'I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my mother seems to descend, and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me—I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better; my Grandmother too will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, "Polly, what are those poor crazy moyther'd brains of yours thinking of always?"—Poor Mary, my Mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a Mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right. Never could believe how much *she* loved her—but met her caresses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse.—Still she was a good mother, God forbid I should think of her but *most respectfully, most affectionately*. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not worthy of one tenth of that affection, which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection, that every act of duty and of love she could pay, every kindness (and I speak true, when I say to the hurting of her health, and, most probably, in great part to the derangement of her senses) thro' a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could shew her, *SHE EVER DID*. I will some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my Sister's excellencies; 'twill seem like exaggeration; but I will do it. At present short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you. God love you; God love us all——

C. LAMB.

[This letter is the only one in which Lamb speaks freely of his mother. He dwells on her memory in *Blank Verse*, 1798, but in later years he mentioned her in his writings only twice—in the *Elia* essays 'New Year's Eve' and 'My First Play'—and then very indirectly: probably from the wish to spare his sister pain, although Talfourd tells us that Mary Lamb spoke of her mother often. We can be more sensitive for others than they need. Compare the poem on page 60.

The references at the beginning are to Coleridge's idea of joining Perry on the *Morning Chronicle*; of teaching Mrs. Evans's children; of establishing a school at Derby, on the suggestion of Dr. Crompton; and finally of moving from Bristol to settle down in a cottage at Nether Stowey, and support himself by husbandry and literature.]

## II. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 24th, 1796.

Coleridge, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life! I only wish you were *but* settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us two, when you talk in a religious strain,—not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy, than consistent with the humility of genuine piety. To instance now in your last letter—you say, ‘it is by the press [*sic*], that God hath given finite spirits both evil and good (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men) a portion of it were of His Omnipresence!’ Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine Mind and it, which makes such language blasphemy? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle you say, ‘you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature.’ What more than this do those men say, who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity,—men, whom you or I scruple not to call idolaters? Man, full of imperfections, at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependence; man, a weak and ignorant being, ‘servile’ from his birth ‘to all the skiey influences,’ with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge; I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot *instruct* you; I only wish to *remind* you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament (*our best guide*), is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent*: and in my poor mind ‘tis best for us so to consider of Him, as our *heavenly* Father, and our *best Friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of His nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of ‘*dear children*,’ ‘*brethren*,’ and ‘*co-heirs with Christ of the promises*,’ seeking to know no further.

I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson o

comfort to us, whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself and wife, and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birthday so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

God love us all, and may He continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

Sunday Evening.

C. LAMB.

[It is interesting to notice that with these letters Lamb suddenly assumes a gravity, independence, and sense of authority that hitherto his correspondence has lacked. The responsibility of the household seems to have awakened his unusual and precocious common sense and fine understanding sense of justice. Previously he had ventured to criticize only Coleridge's literary exercises; he places his finger now on conduct too.

Coleridge's 'last letter' has not been preserved; but the 'first fine consolatory epistle' is printed above.

This letter contains the first mention of Charles Lloyd (1775-1839), who was afterward to be for a while intimately associated with Lamb. Charles Lloyd was the son of a Quaker banker of Birmingham. He had published a volume of poems the year before, and had met Coleridge. The proposition that Lloyd should live with Coleridge and become in a way his pupil was agreed to by his parents, and in September he accompanied the philosopher to Bristol. Lloyd was a sensitive, delicate youth, with an acute power of analysis and considerable grasp of metaphysical ideas. He was by only two days Lamb's junior.]

## 12. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*Oct. 28th, 1796.*

My dear Friend, I am not ignorant that to be a partaker of the Divine Nature is a phrase to be met with in Scripture: I am only apprehensive, lest we in these latter days, tinctured (some of us perhaps pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning, which the primitive users of them, the simple fishermen of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike; the feeble narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect and the everywhere diffused mind of Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—portion of omnipresence—omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is unlimitedness. How can omnipresence be



affirmed of anything in part? But enough of this spirit of disputatiousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you were doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled once for all.

I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with me in my sister's continued reason and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her; she is likely to be as comfortably situated in all respects as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest by way of crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to co-operate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her,—our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read; for reading was her daily bread.

Have you seen Bowles's new poem on 'Hope?' What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces? The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend—so for the present adieu.

Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the 'Pursuits of Literature?' From the extracts in the 'British Review' I judge it to be a very humorous thing; in particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr. Darwin's poetry. Among all your quaint readings did you ever light upon Walton's 'Complete Angler?' I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart; there are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it. Have you made it up with Southey yet? Surely one of you two must have been a very silly fellow, and the other not much better, to fall out like boarding-school misses; kiss, shake hands, and make it up?

When will he be delivered of his new epic? *Mador*, I think, is to be the name of it; though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What review are you connected with? If with any, why do you delay to notice White's book? You are justly offended at its profaneness; but surely you have undervalued

its wit, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you think that in *Slender's* death and madness there is most exquisite humour, mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it; nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, etc. Give it a lift, if you can. I suppose you know that Allen's wife is dead, and he, just situated as he was, never the better, as the worldly people say, for her death, her money with her children being taken off his hands. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity, and not long for them, and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember, you are not in Arcadia when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan; and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about; so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

God love you, Coleridge!—Our best loves and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sara, and your little one.

[Bowles's poem was *Hope, an Allegorical Sketch on slowly recovering from Sickness*. See notes on pages 18 and 61.

*The Pursuits of Literature* was a literary satire in the form of dialogues in verse, garnished with very outspoken notes, by Thomas James Mathias (1754?–1835), which appeared between 1794 and 1797.

Southey had returned from Portugal in the summer, when the quarrel between Coleridge and himself revived; but about the time of Hartley's birth some kind of a reconciliation was patched up. *Madox*, as it happened, was not published until 1805, although in its first form it was completed in 1797.

Writing to Charles Lloyd senior in December 1796, Coleridge says that he gives his evenings to his engagements with the *Critical Review* and *New Monthly Magazine*.

This is the passage in *Falstaff's Letters* describing *Slender's* death:

#### DAVY TO SHALLOW

Master Abram is dead, gone, your Worship—dead! Master Abram! Oh! good your Worship, a's gone.—A' never throve, since a' came from Windsor—twas his death. I call'd him a rebel, your Worship—but a' was all subject—a' was subject to any babe, as much as a King—a' turn'd, like as it were the latter end of a lover's lute—a' was all peace and resignation—a' took delight in nothing but his book of songs and sonnets—a' would go to the Stroud side under the large beech tree, and sing, till 'twas quite pity of our lives to mark <sup>intel</sup> for his chin grew as long as a muscle—Oh! a' sung his soul and body away—a' was lank as any greyhound, and had such a scent! I hid his songs among your Worship's law-books; for I thought if a' could not get at them, it might be to his quiet; but a' snuff'd

'em out in a moment.—Good your Worship, have the wise woman of Brentford secured—Master Abram may have been conjured—Peter Simple says, a' never look'd up, after a' sent to the wise woman—Marry, a' was always given to look down afore his elders; a' might do it, a' was given to it—your Worship knows it; but then 'twas peak and pert with him—a' was a man again, marry, in the turn of his heel.—A' died, your Worship, just about one, at the crow of the cock.—I thought how it was with him; for a' talk'd as quick, aye, marry, as glib as your Worship; and a' smiled, and look'd at his own nose, and call'd 'Sweet Ann Page.' I ask'd him if a' would eat—so a' bade us commend him to his Cousin Robert (a' never call'd your Worship so before) and bade us get hot meat, for a' would not say nay to Ann again.<sup>1</sup>—But a' never liv'd to touch it—a' began all in a moment to sing *Lovers all, a Madrigal*. 'Twas the only song Master Abram ever learnt out of book, and clean by heart, your Worship—and so a' sung, and smiled, and look'd askew at his own nose, and sung, and sung on, till his breath waxed shorter, and shorter, and shorter, and a' fell into a struggle and died. I beseech your Worship to think he was well tended—I look'd to him, your Worship, late and soon, and crept at his heel all day long, an it had been any fallow dog—but I thought a' could never live, for a' did so sing, and then a' never drank with it—I knew 'twas a bad sign—yea, a' sung, your Worship, marry, without drinking a drop.]

## 13. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 8th, 1796.

My Brother, my Friend,—I am distress for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has anything, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be! But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts, that I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things; now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters, but it may divert us both from unpleasant feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for, those little pictures of your feelings which you

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Latter part of the first scene, first act.

lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse) such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason: the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind: they make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles—I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first Sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do)—I allow it to run thus, '*Fairy Land*' &c. &c., as I [? you] last wrote it.

The Fragments I now send you I want printed to get rid of 'em; for, while they stick bur-like to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long—most sincerely I speak it—I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to my soul; I feel it is; and these questions about words, and debates about alterations, take me off, I am conscious, from the properer business of my life. Take my sonnets once for all, and do not propose any re-amendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And pray admit or reject these fragments, as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em Sketches, Fragments, or what you will, but do not entitle any of my *things* Love Sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain *nothing*; 'twas a weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is now open before me), 'if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul.' Thank God, the folly has left me for ever; not even a review of my love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my Grandame, she shall be one. 'Tis among the few verses I ever wrote (that to Mary is another) which profit me in the recollection. God love her,—and may we two never love each other less!

These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving; how will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine: do whatsoever thou listest with them. My

eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy; God bless you and yours, me and mine! Good night.

C. LAMB.

I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you, that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and in my eyes best, sonnet (so you call 'em),

So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear,  
And dearer was the mother for the child.

Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed, and leave my sheet unfilled (a good piece of nightwork for an idle body like me), so will finish with begging you to send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara.—

Once more good night.

[Coleridge, on 2nd November, had begun to suffer from his lifelong enemy, neuralgia, the result largely of worry concerning his future, so many of his projects having broken down. He was subduing it with laudanum—the beginning of that fatal habit.]

We do not know what were the verses which Coleridge had sent Lamb, but probably the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley, the third of which is referred to below.

'Love Sonnets.' Lamb changed his mind again on this subject, and yet again.

Coleridge's last of the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley was entitled *Sonnet to a Friend* [Charles Lloyd] *who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me.* It closed with the lines which Lamb copies.]

#### 14. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 14th, 1796.

Coleridge, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles. Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand through all this valley of weeping, showed you the dark green yew trees and the willow shades where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future,

When all the vanities of life's brief day  
Oblivion's hurrying hand hath swept away,  
And all its sorrows, at the awful blast  
Of the archangel's trump, are but as shadows past.

I have another sort of dedication in my head for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be unexpected, and it will give her pleasure; or do you think it will look whimsical at all? As I have not spoke to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give in to: a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd or without him? in either case my little portion may come last, and after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title-page to stand thus:—

POEMS,  
CHIEFLY LOVE SONNETS

BY  
CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA HOUSE.

Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert, whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman choose what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise none? May not a publican put up the sign of the Saracen's Head, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the Cat and Gridiron?

(MOTTO.)

This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,  
When my first fire knew no adulterate incense,  
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,  
In the best language my true tongue could tell me,  
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,  
I sued and served. Long did I love this lady.

MASSINGER.

THE DEDICATION

THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,  
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING  
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,  
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY  
LOVE IN IDLENESS,  
ARE,  
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,  
INSCRIBED TO  
MARY ANN LAMB,  
THE AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.

This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me; thus, with its trappings of laureatship, I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. Oh! my friend, I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those 'merrier days, not the 'pleasant days of hope, not 'those wanderings with a fair hair'd maid,' which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *school-boy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain; and the day, my friend, I trust will come; there will be 'time enough' for kind offices of love, if 'Heaven's eternal year' be ours. Hereafter, her meek spirit shall not reproach me. Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind 'charities' of relationship: these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health; *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

C. LAMB.

[It seems to have been Coleridge's intention to dedicate the second edition of his *Poems* to Bowles; but he changed his mind and dedicated it to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge. A sonnet to Bowles was included in the volume, a kind of sub-dedication of the other sonnets, but it had appeared also in the 1796 volume.

Lamb's instructions concerning his share in the 1797 volume were carried out, except that the sub-title was omitted.

The quotations 'merrier days' and 'wanderings with a fair hair'd maid' are from Lamb's own sonnets; those below them from Dryden's *Elgy on Mrs. Killigrew*.

Coleridge had paid in the summer a long-deferred visit of reconciliation to his family at Ottery St. Mary.]

# 15. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 2nd December 1796.]

I have delay'd writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40: 63: 84: above all, let me protest strongly

against your rejecting the 'Complaint of Ninathoma,' 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the 'Music of Caril.' If a vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial *too*) the Epitaph on an Infant, of which its Author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line-wonder, I'll tell you what [to] do: sell the copywright of it at once to a country statuary; commence in this manner Death's prime poet laureat; and let your verses be adopted in every village round instead of those hitherto famous ones 'Afflictions sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain.' I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the Monthly Magazine—write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines 'Laugh all that weep,' etc.—I would sacrifice them, but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that in honest truth I can't spare them. As things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page.—White's book is at length reviewed in the Monthly; was it your doing, or Dyer's to whom I sent him? Or rather do you not write in the Critical? for I observed, in an Article of this Month's a line quoted out of *that* sonnet on Mrs. Siddons 'with eager wond'ring and perturb'd delight'—and a line from *that* sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger. That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestly, Burke—'twas 2 Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the Salutation, which is even now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, Egghot, welch Rabbits, metaphysics and Poetry.

Are we NEVER to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now—I have never met with any one, never shall meet with any one, who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society—I have no one to talk all these matters about to—I lack friends, I lack books to supply their absence. But these complaints ill become me: let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but 2 months back—but 2 months. O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me—remind me of them; remind me of my Duty. Talk seriously with me when you do write. I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your sollicitude about my Sister. She is quite well,—but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because at present it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together: secondly from a regard to the world's good report, for I fear, I fear, tongues will be busy *when-ever* that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has prest it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement—what she hath done



to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not; do you? I am starving at the India house, near 7 o'clock without my dinner, and so it has been and will be almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint,—and then to CARDS with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace—but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at Cribbage have got my father's leave to write awhile: with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, 'If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all.' The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh.

I told you, I do not approve of your omissions. Neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements: I have not time to point out a better, and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning indeed with the Joan of Arc lines I coincide entirely with: I love a splendid Outset, a magnificent Portico; and the Diapason is Grand—the Religious Musings—when I read them, I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is, 'Laugh all that weep' especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception: and I ask what business they have among yours—but Friendship covereth a multitude of defects. Why omit 73? At all events, let me plead for those former pages,—40. 63. 84. 86. I should like, for old acquaintance sake, to spare 62. 119 would have made a figure among *Shenstone's* Elegies: you may admit it or reject, as you please. In the Man of Ross let the old line stand as it used: 'wine-cheer'd moments' much better than the lame present one. 94, change the harsh word 'foodful' into 'dulcet' or, if not too harsh, 'nourishing.' 91, 'moveless': is that as good as 'moping'?—8, would it not read better omitting those 2 lines last but 6 about Inspiration? I want some loppings made in the Chatterton; it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular Lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it—or is it too late—or do you think it needs none? Don't reject those verses in one of your Watchmen—'Dear native brook' &c.—nor, I think, those last lines you sent me, in which 'all effortless' is without doubt to be preferred to 'inactive.' If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, 'tis that I am stupified with a tooth-ache. 37, would not the concluding lines of the 1st paragraph be well omitted—& it go on 'So to sad sympathies' &c.? In 40, if you retain it, 'wove' the learned Toil is better than 'urge,' which spoils the personification. Hang it, do not omit 48. 52. 53. What you do retain tho', call sonnets for God's sake, and not effusions,—spite of your ingenious anticipation of ridicule in your Preface. The last 5 lines of 59

are too good to be lost, the rest is not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate—I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and then to this intercourse (the only intercourse, I fear we two shall ever have), this conversation, with your friend—such I boast to be called.

God love you and yours.

Write to me when you move, lest I direct wrong.

Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines 129 are probably too light for the volume where the *Religious Musings* are—but I remember some very beautiful lines address by somebody at Bristol to somebody at London.

God bless you once more.

C. LAMB.

Thursday Night.

[This letter refers to the preparation of Coleridge's second edition of his *Poems*. 'Why omit 40: 63: 84?'—these were *Absence*, *To the Autumnal Moon*, and the imitation from Ossian.

The *Epitaph on an Infant* ran thus:

Ere Sin could blight, or Sorrow fade,  
Death came with friendly care;  
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed  
And bade it blossom there.

Many years later Lamb applied the first two lines to a sucking pig in his *Elia* essay on 'Roast Pig.' The old epitaph runs:

Afflictions sore long time I bore,  
Physicians were in vain;  
Till Heaven did please my woes to ease,  
And take away my pain.

Coleridge's 'very beautiful poem' in the *Monthly Magazine* (for October) was *Reflections on Entering into Active Life*, beginning, 'Low was our pretty cot.'

Lamb's lines, *Laugh all that weep*, I cannot find. We learn later that they were in blank verse.

*Falstaff's Letters* was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* for November 1796, very favourably. The article was quite possibly by Coleridge.

The sonnet on Mrs. Siddons was written by Lamb and Coleridge together, when Coleridge was in London at the end of 1794, and it formed one of a series of sonnets on eminent persons printed in the *Morning Chronicle*, of which those on Bowles, Priestley, and Burke were others. The quotation from it was in an article in the November *Critical Review* on the *Muse Etonensis*.

'One man has prest it on me.' There is reason to suppose that this was John Lamb, the brother.

As it happened Coleridge did not begin his second edition with the *Joan of Arc* lines, but with the *Ode to the New Year*. The *Religious Musings* brought Coleridge's part of the volume to a close.]

## 16. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated at end: 5th December 1796.]

## TO A YOUNG LADY GOING OUT TO INDIA

Hard is the heart, that does not melt with Ruth  
 When care sits cloudy on the brow of Youth,  
 When bitter griefs the *female* bosom swell  
 And Beauty meditates a fond farewell  
 To her loved native land, and early home,  
 In search of peace thro' 'stranger climes to roam.' <sup>1</sup>

The Muse, with glance prophetic, sees her stand,  
 Forsaken, silent Lady, on the strand  
 Of farthest India, sickening at the war  
 Of waves slow-beating, dull upon the shore  
 Stretching, at gloomy intervals, her eye  
 O'er the wide waters vainly to espy  
 The long-expected bark, in which to find  
 Some tidings of a world she has left behind.

In that sad hour shall start the gushing tear  
 For scenes her childhood loved, now doubly dear,  
 In that sad hour shall frantic memory awake  
 Pangs of remorse for slighted England's sake,  
 And for the sake of many a tender tie  
 Of Love or Friendship pass'd too lightly by.  
 Unwept, unpitied, midst an alien race,  
 And the cold looks of many a stranger face,  
 How will her poor heart bleed, and chide the day,  
 That from her country took her far away.

[Lamb has struck his pen through the foregoing poem.]

Coleridge, the above has some few decent [lines in] it, and in the paucity of my portion of your volume may as well be inserted; I would also wish to retain the following if only to perpetuate the memory of so exquisite a pleasure as I have often received at the performance of the tragedy of Douglas, when Mrs. Siddons has been the Lady Randolph. Both pieces may be inserted between the sonnets and the sketches—in which latter, the last leaf but one of them, I beg you to alter the words 'pain and want' to 'pain and grief,' this last being a more familiar and ear-satisfying combination. Do it I beg of you. To understand the following, if you are not acquainted with the play, you should know that on the death of Douglas his mother threw herself down a rock; and that at that time Scotland was busy in repelling the Danes.

<sup>1</sup> Bowles. *The African*, line 27.

## THE TOMB OF DOUGLAS

*(See the Tragedy, of that name)*

When her son, her Douglas died,  
To the steep rock's fearful side  
Fast the frantic mother hied.

O'er her blooming warrior dead  
Many a tear did Scotland shed,  
And shrieks of long and loud lament  
From her Grampian hills she sent.

Like one awakening from a trance,  
She met the shock of Lochlin's lance.  
On her rude invader foe  
Return'd an hundred fold the blow.

Denmark

Drove the taunting spoiler home:  
Mournful thence she took her way  
To do observance at the tomb,  
Where the son of Douglas [lay].

Round about the tomb did go  
In solemn state and order slow,  
Silent pace, and black attire  
Earl, or Knight, or good Esquire,  
Who e'er by deeds of valour done  
In battle had high honors won;  
Whoe'er in their pure veins could trace  
The blood of Douglas' noble race.

With them the flower of minstrels came,  
And to their cunning harps did frame  
In doleful numbers piercing rhymes,  
Such strains as in the olden times  
Had soothed the spirit of Fingal  
Echoing thro' his father's Hall.

Scottish maidens, drop a tear  
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier.  
Brave youth and comely 'bove compare  
All golden shone his burnish'd hair;  
Valor and smiling courtesy  
Played in the sunbeams of his eye.  
Closed are those eyes that shone so fair  
And stain'd with blood his yellow hair.  
Scottish maidens drop a tear  
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier.

Not a tear, I charge you, shed  
For the false Glanvalvon dead;  
Unpitied let Glanvalvon lie,  
Foul stain to arms and chivalry.

Behind his back the traitor came,  
And Douglas died without his fame.

[Lamb has struck his pen through the lines against which I have put  
an asterisk.]

- \* Scottish maidens, drop a tear,
- \* O'er the beauteous hero's bier.
- \* Bending warrior, o'er thy grave,  
Young light of Scotland early spent!  
Thy country thee shall long lament,
- \* Douglas 'Beautiful and Brave'!  
And oft to after times shall tell,  
In Hope's sweet prime my Hero fell.

[Lamb has struck his pen through the remainder.]

Thane or Lordling, think no scorn  
Of the poor and lowly-born.  
In brake obscure or lonely dell  
The simple flowret prospers well;  
The gentler virtues cottage-bred,  
Thrive best beneath the humble shed.  
Low-born Hinds, oppress, obscure,  
Ye who patiently endure  
To bend the knee and bow the head,  
And thankful eat another's bread  
Well may ye mourn your best friend dead,  
Till Life with Grief together end:  
He would have been the poor man's friend.

omitted

Bending, warrior, o'er thy grave,  
Young light of Scotland early spent!  
Thy country thee shall long lament,  
Douglas, 'Beautiful and Brave'!  
And oft to after times shall tell,  
In life's young prime my Hero fell.

omitted

omitted

At length I have done with verse making. Not that I relish other people's poetry less,—theirs comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading the 'Task' with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend, who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.' Write to me.—God love you and yours.

C. L

Is 'morbid wantonness of woe'  
a good and allowable phrase?

[The name of the young lady going out to India is not known; the verses were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for March 1797, but were not included in Lamb's section of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. *The Tomb of Douglas* was, however, there. The poem in which the alteration 'pain and grief' was to be made (but was not made, or was made and cancelled later) was *Fancy Employed on Divine Subjects*.

The marginal note about 'morbid wantonness' refers to Coleridge's lines *To a Young Man of Fortune* (Charles Lloyd). Coleridge ultimately changed 'morbid' to 'fantastic.'

The 'divine chit-chat of Cowper' was Coleridge's own phrase. It is a pretty circumstance that since 1888 Lamb and Cowper have shared (with Keats) a memorial in Edmonton Church, although Cowper is there solely on account of the route taken by John Gilpin on his famous ride.]

#### 17. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Little Queen Street, *Night of 9th December*,] 1796.

I am sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present as thoroughly as I feel it deserves; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it.

In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, & at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is 'indolent and mulish'—I quote her own words—and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The Lady, with delicate Irony, remarks that, if I am not an Hypocrite, I shall rejoyce to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us, while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own 'ease and tranquillity' to keep her any longer, & in fine summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoyce to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitend we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expence may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities I am somewhat nonplused, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you tho from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth.

Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks on the poems you sent me, I can[not] but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love—what L[lloyd] calls 'the feverish and romantic tyè'—hath too long

domineerd over all the charities of home: the dear domestic ties of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper has a beautiful passage in his 'Task,'—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents: and Hayley's sweet lines to his mother are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper's lines, some of them, are:

How gladly would the man recall to life  
The boy's neglected sire; a mother, too,  
That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,  
Might he demand them at the dates of death.

I cannot but smile to see my Granny so gayly deck'd forth: tho', I think, whoever altered 'thy' praises to 'her' praises, 'thy' honoured memory to 'her' honoured memory, did wrong—they best express my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection, in which the mind is disposed to apostrophise the departed objects of its attachment, and, breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the 1st to the 3rd, and from the 3rd to the 1st person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th, are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *do's* and *did's*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

The lines on Friday are very pleasing—'Yet calls itself in pride of Infancy woman or man,' &c., 'affection's tottering troop'—are prominent beauties. Another time, when my mind were more at ease, I could be more particular in my remarks, and I would postpone them now, only I want some diversion of mind. The *Melancholy Man* is a charming piece of poetry, only the 'whys' (with submission) are too many. Yet the questions are too good to be any of 'em omitted. For those lines of yours, page 18, omitted in magazine, I think the 3 first better retain'd—the 3 last, which are somewhat simple in the most affronting sense of the word, better omitted: to this my taste directs me—I have no claim to prescribe to you. 'Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies' is an exquisite line, but you knew *that* when you wrote 'em, and I trifle in pointing such out. 'Tis altogether the sweetest thing to me you ever wrote—tis all honey. 'No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart, Blest hour, it was a Luxury to be'—I recognise feelings, which I may taste again, if tranquility has not taken his flight for ever, and I will not believe but I shall be happy, very happy again. The next poem to your friend is very beautiful: need I instance the pretty fancy of 'the rock's collected tears'—or that original line 'pour'd all its healthful greenness on the soul':—let it be, since you asked me, 'as neighbouring fountains each reflect the whole'—tho' that is somewhat harsh; indeed the ending

is not so finish'd as the rest, which if you omit in your forthcoming edition, you will do the volume wrong, and the very binding will cry out. Neither shall you omit the 2 following poems. 'The hour when we shall meet again,' is fine fancy, tis true, but fancy catering in the Service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her. Do not, do not omit it. Your sonnet to the *River Otter* excludes those equally beautiful lines, which deserve not to be lost, 'as the tired savage,' &c., and I prefer that copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference.

Another time, I may notice more particularly Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets. I shrink from them now: my teasing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection, as well as to show you I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you two appear to be about realising an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. C., and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart!—a kiss for me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

C. LAMB.

God love you!

I write, for one thing, to say that I shall write no more till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move.

My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you: continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* 'all barrenness.'

[Lamb's Aunt Hetty, to whom the second paragraph refers, was very soon after this to get her release from the troubles of life.

The poetical present, as Dykes Campbell pointed out in the *Athenaum*, 13th June 1891, consisted of Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*, to which Lamb had contributed *The Grandame*, and of a little privately printed collection of poems by Coleridge and Lloyd, which they had intended to publish, but did not. This pamphlet has completely vanished. In addition to these two works, the poetical present also comprised another privately printed collection, a little pamphlet of twenty-eight sonnets which Coleridge had arranged for the purpose of binding up with those of Bowles. It included three of Bowles's, four of Coleridge's, four of Lamb's, four of Southey's, and the remainder by Dermody, Lloyd, Charlotte Smith, and others. A copy is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

'The poems you sent me.' This would be Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*, a rather sumptuous quarto: hence the phrase about Granny being so 'gaily deck'd forth.' When Lamb reprinted *The Grandame* in Coleridge's second edition, 1797, he put back the original text.

This is the last letter to carry the Little Queen Street address. What was



left of the family—that is John Lamb senior, Charles, Aunt Hetty, and a maid-servant—soon after moved to 45 Little Chapel Street, Pentonville. John Lamb the younger probably did not join them there.]

## 18. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 10th, 1796.

I had put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me alive again: my last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me, while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar; but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy Watchman's, thy bellman's, verses, I do retort upon thee, thou libellous varlet,—why, you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud? But I submit, to show my humility, most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying, you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most unmuse-ical soul,—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of Olivers)—did you not in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting anything after you. At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor anything approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man? 'At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs'—and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This though is not my case. The tender cast of soul, sombred with melancholy and subsiding recollections, is favourable to the Sonnet or the Elegy; but from

The sainted growing woof,  
The teasing troubles keep aloof.

The music of poesy may charm for a while the importunate teasing cares of life; but the teased and troubled man is not in a disposition to make that music.

You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when, in my highly agitated and perhaps distorted state of mind, I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my

own verses, all my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources: I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept:

Noting ere they past away  
The little lines of yesterday.

I almost burned all your letters,—I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers, for, much as he dwelt upon your conversation while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down,—you were the cause of my madness—you and your damned foolish sensibility and melancholy—and he lamented with a true brotherly feeling that we ever met, even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have 'cursed wit and Poetry and Pope.' I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way for a season; but I have claimed them in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating—they are sacred things with me.

Publish your *Burns* when and how you like, it will be new to me,—my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the 'divine chit-chat' of the latter: by the expression I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses an hundredfold more dearly than if she heaped 'line upon line,' out-Hannah-ing Hannah More, and had rather hear you sing 'Did a very little baby' by your family fire-side, than listen to you when you were repeating one of Bowles's sweetest sonnets in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fireside at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one 'cordial in this melancholy vale'—the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting; converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament—they talk a language I understand not: I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter and with the dead in their books. My sister indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading

and knowledge from the self-same sources, our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow: never having kept separate company, or any 'company' 'together'—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connexions, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us. You talk very wisely, and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness, will be sympathy. You can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write, till you are moved; and of course shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd, if he is with you.

C. LAMB.

I will get 'Nature and Art,'—have not seen it yet—nor any of Jeremy Taylor's works.

[The reference to the bellman's verses (at Easter the bellman, or watchman, used to leave verses at the houses on his beat as a reminder of his usefulness) is not quite clear. Lamb evidently had submitted for the new volume some lines which Coleridge would not pass.

'At lovers' perjuries, they say, Jove laughs.' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii. 92.

Coleridge some time before had sent to Lamb the very sweet lines relative to Burns, under the title, *To a Friend who had declared his Intention of Writing no more Poetry*.

'Did a very little baby.' In the Appendix to vol. i of the 1847 edition of the *Biog. Lit.*, Sara Coleridge writes, concerning children and domestic evenings, "'Did a very little babby make a very great noise?" is the first line of a nursery song, in which Mr. Coleridge recorded some of his experience on this recondite subject.' The song has disappeared.

*Nature and Art* was Mrs. Inchbald's story, published in 1796. Lamb later became an enthusiast for Jeremy Taylor.]

#### 19. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated outside: 2nd January 1797.]

Your success in the higher species of the Ode is such, as bespeaks you born for achievements of loftier enterprize than to linger in the lowly train of songsters and sonneteers. Sincerely I think your Ode one of

the finest I have read. The opening is in the spirit of the sublimest allegory. The idea of the 'skirts of the departing year, seen far onwards, waving on the wind' is one of those noble Hints at which the Reader's imagination is apt to kindle into grand conceptions. Do the words 'impetuous' and 'solemnize' harmonize well in the same line? Think and judge. In the 2d strophe, there seems to be too much play of fancy to be consistent with that continued elevation we are taught to expect from the strain of the foregoing. The parenthized line (by the way I abominate parentheses in this kind of poetry) at the beginn<sup>g</sup> of 7th page, and indeed all that gradual description of the throes and pangs of nature in childbirth, I do not much like, and those 4 first lines,—I mean 'tomb gloom anguish and languish'—rise not above mediocrity. In the Epode, your mighty genius comes again: 'I marked ambition' &c. Thro' the whole Epod indeed you carry along our souls in a full spring tide of feeling and imaginat<sup>n</sup>. Here is the 'Storm of Music,' as Cowper expresses it. Would it not be more abrupt 'Why does the northern Conqueress stay' or 'where does the northern Conqueress stay'?—this change of measure, rather than the feebl<sup>r</sup> 'Ah! whither.' 'Foul her life and dark her tomb, mighty army of the dead, dance like deathflies' &c.: here is genius, here is poetry, rapid, irresistible. The concluding line, is it not a personif: without use? 'Nec deus intersit'—except indeed for rhyme sake. Would the laws of Strophe and antistrophe, which, if they are as unchangeable, I suppose are about as wise, [as] the Mede and Persian laws, admit of expunging that line altogether, and changing the preceding one to 'and he, poor madman, deem'd it quench'd in endless night?'—*fond* madman or *proud* madman if you will, but *poor* is more contemptuous. If I offer alterations of my own to your poetry, and admit not yours in mine, it is upon the principle of a present to a rich man being graciously accepted, and the same present to a poor man being considered as an insult. To return—The Antistrophe that follows is not inferior in grandeur or original: but is I think not faultless—e: g: How is Memory *alone*, when all the etherial multitude are there? Reflect. Again 'storiedst thy sad hours' is harsh, I need not tell you, but you have gained your point in expressing much meaning in few words: 'Purple locks and snow white glories' 'mild Arcadians ever blooming' 'seas of milk and ships of amber' these are things the Muse talks about when, to borrow H. Walpole's witty phrase, she is not finely-phrenzied, only a little light-headed, that's all. 'Purple locks.' They may manage things differently in fairy land, but your 'golden tresses' are more to my fancy. ~ The spirit of the Earth is a most happy conceit, and the last line is one of the luckiest I ever heard—'*and stood up beautiful before the cloudy seat.*' I cannot enough admire it. 'Tis somehow picturesque

in the very sound. The 2d Antistrophe (what is the meaning of these things?) is fine and faultless (or to vary the alliteration and not diminish the affectation) beautiful and blameless. I only except to the last line as meaningless after the preceding, and useless entirely—besides, why disjoin 'nature and the world' here, when you had confounded both in their pregnancy: 'the common earth and nature,' recollect, a little before—And there is a dismal superfluity in the unmeaning vocable 'unhurld'—the worse, as it is so evidently a rhyme-fetch.—'Death like he dozes' is a prosaic conceit—indeed all the Epode as far as 'brother's corse' I most heartily commend to annihilation. The enthusiast of the lyre should not be so feebly, so tediously, delineative of his own feelings; 'tis not the way to become 'Master of our affections.' The address to Albion is very agreeable, and concludes even beautifully: 'speaks safety to his island child'—'Sworded'—epithet I would change for 'cruel.' The immediately succeeding lines are prosaic: 'mad avarice' is an unhappy combination; and 'the coward distance yet with kindling pride' is not only reprehensible for the antithetical turn, but as it is a quotation: 'safe distance' and 'coward distance' you have more than once had recourse to before—And the Lyric Muse, in her enthusiasm, should talk the language of her country, something removed from common use, something 'recent,' unborrowed. The dreams of destruction 'soothing her fierce solitude,' are vastly grand and terrific: still you weaken the effect by that superfluous and easily-conceived parenthesis that finishes the page. The foregoing image, few minds *could* have conceived, few tongues could have so cloath'd; 'muttering distempered triumph' &c. is vastly fine. I hate imperfect beginnings and endings. Now your concluding stanza is worthy of so fine an ode. The beginning was awakening and striking; the ending is soothing and solemn—Are you serious when you ask whether you shall admit this ode? it would be strange infatuation to leave out your Chatterton; mere insanity to reject this. Unless you are fearful that the splendid thing may be a means of 'eclipsing many a softer satellite' that twinkles thro' the volume. Neither omit the annex'd little poem. For my part, detesting alliterations, I should make the 1st line 'Away, with this fantastic pride of woe.' Well may you relish Bowles's allegory. I need only tell you, I have read, and will only add, that I dislike ambition's name *gilded* on his helmet-cap, and that I think, among the more striking personages you notice, you omitted the *most* striking, Remorse! 'He saw the trees—the sun—then hied him to his cave again'!!! The 2d stanza of mania is superfl: the 1st was never exceeded. The 2d is too methodic: for *her*. With all its load of beauties, I am more *affected* with the 6 first stanzas of the Elegiac poem written during sickness. Tell me your feelings.

If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines will atone for the total want of anything like merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my other sonnet to my sister.

Friend of my earliest years, & childish days,  
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shared  
Companion dear; & we alike have fared  
Poor pilgrims we, thro' life's unequal ways  
It were unwisely done, should we refuse  
To cheer our path, as featly as we may,  
Our lonely path to cheer, as travellers use  
With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay.  
And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,  
Of mercies shewn, & all our sickness heal'd,  
And in his judgments God remembering love;  
And we will learn to praise God evermore  
For those 'Glad tidings of great joy' reveal'd  
By that sooth messenger, sent from above.

1797.

If you think the epithet 'sooth' quaint, substitute 'blest messenger.' I hope you are printing my sonnets, as I directed you—particularly the 2d. 'Methinks' &c. with my last added 6 lines at y<sup>e</sup> end: and all of 'em as I last made 'em.

This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey; to wish success to all your projects; to 'bid fair peace' be to that house; to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara, and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me: I feel to whom I am obliged primarily for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that 'Art and Nature' is. I am at present re-re-reading Priestley's examinat of the Scotch Drs: how the Rogue strings 'em up! three together! You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining piece of reasoning. If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley's works. Can you recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat and a slight species of scarlet fever. God bless her too.

Monday Morning, at Office.

['Storm of Music.' In Cowper's *Table Talk*, line 491:

The storm of music shakes th' astonish'd crowd.

'Nec deus intersit': Nor let a god intervene. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 191.

'Mild Arcadians,' etc. The first phrase is from Pope's *Song by a Person of*

*Quality*, the second from Coleridge's *Ode* under discussion, and the third from Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, v. ii, last line:

Lutes, Laurels, Seas of Milk and Ships of Amber.

The 'annex'd little poem' was that *Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune*, which now began, and still begins, 'Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe.' Bowles's allegory was *Hope, an Allegorical Sketch*, recently published.

Lamb's sonnet was not included in the 1797 volume, but was printed in the *Monthly Magazine*, October 1797. Coleridge had moved to his cottage at Nether Stowey on the last day of 1796.

'Bid fair peace.' *Lycidas*, line 22.

By 'Art and Nature' Lamb again means Mrs. Inchbald's *Nature and Art*.

Priestley's book would be *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, Dr. Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*, and Dr. Oswald's *Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 1774.

Mary Lamb was still an inmate of an institution, where her brother was a constant visitor.]

## 20. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Saturday.

[P.M. 10th January 1797.]

I am completely reconciled to that second strophe, and wa[i]ve all objection. In spite of the Grecian Lyrists, I persist on [in] thinking your brief personification of Madness useless; reverence forbids me to say, impertinent. Golden locks and snow white glories are as incongruous as your former, and if the great Italian painters, of whom my friend knows about as much as the man in the moon, if these great gentlemen be on your side, I see no harm in retaining the purple—the glories that I have observed to encircle the heads of saints and madonnas in those old paintings have been mostly of a dirty drab-color'd yellow—a dull gambogium. Keep your old line: it will excite a confused kind of pleasurable idea in the reader's mind, not clear enough to be called a conception, or just enough, I think, to reduce to painting. It is a rich line, you say, and riches hide a many faults. I maintain, that in the 2nd antist: you *do* disjoin Nature and the world, and contrary to your conduct in the 2d strophe. 'Nature joins her groans' joins with *whom*, a God's name, but the world or earth in line preceding? But this is being over curious, I acknowledge. Nor *did* I call the *last* line useless, I only objected to 'unhurld.' I cannot be made to like the former part of that 2d Epode; I cannot be made to feel it, as I do the parallel places in Isaiah, Jeremy and Daniel. Whether it is that in the present case the rhyme impairs the efficacy; or that the circumstances are feigned, and we are conscious of a made up lye in the case, and the narrative is too long winded to preserve the semblance of truth; or that lines 8. 9. 10.

14 in part: 17 and 18 are mean and unenthusiastic; or that lines 5 to 8 in their change of rhyme shew like art—I don't know, but it strikes me as something meant to affect, and failing in its purpose. Remember my waywardness of feeling is single, and singly stands opposed to all your friends, and what is one among many! This I know, that your quotations from the prophets have never escaped me, and never fail'd to affect me strongly. I hate that simile. I am glad you have amended that parenthesis in the account of Destruction. I like it well now. Only alter [? omit] that history of child-bearing, and all will do well. Let the obnoxious Epode remain, to terrify such of your friends as are willing to be terrified. I think I would omit the Notes, not as not good *per se*, but as uncongenial with the dignity of the Ode. I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed verbatim my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, 'did the wand of Merlin wave'? It looks so like *Mr. Merlin*, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation in Oxford Street; and on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put 'em forth finally as I have, in various letters, settled it; for first a man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends,—and, of course the greater number of his friends, if they differ inter se. Thus taste may safely be put to the vote. I do long to see our names together—not for vanity's sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul, I know or am intimate with, will scarce read the book—so I shall gain nothing quoad famam,—and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying. I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the 6 last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those 6 lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary; that it has no originality in its cast, nor anything in the feelings, but what is common and natural to thousands, nor aught properly called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These 6 lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it, if you like.—What a treasure it is to my poor indolent and unemployed mind, thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, tho' 'tis but a sonnet and that of the lowest order. How mournfully inactive I am!—'Tis night: good-night.

My sister, I thank God, is now recovered. She was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? and what does your worship know about farming? Coleridge, I want



you to write an Epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great End to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition, will shew you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton, by the dainty sweet and soothing phantasies of honeytongued Spenser, I adjure you to attempt the Epic. Or do something more ample than writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something to 'make yourself for ever known,—to make the age to come your own.' But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the Lords of Epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth in the same volume with mine, your religious musings, and that other poem from the Joan of Arc, those promising first fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm—you have strength and amplitude of wing enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairyland, there is ground enough unsound and uncultivated; search there, and realize your favourite Susquehana scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet, very dear to me, the now out of fashion Cowley—favor me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays, even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison—abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour. Why is not your poem on Burns in the Monthly Magazine? I was much disappointed. I have a pleasurable but confused remembrance of it.

When the little volume is printed, send me 3 or 4, at all events not more than 6 copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expence, by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind, and in that case, must reimburse you. My epistle is a model of unconnectedness, but I have no partic: subject to write on, and must proportion my scribble in some degree to the increase of postage. It is not quite fair, considering how burdensome your correspondence from different quarters must be, to add to it with so little shew of reason. I will make an end for this evening. Sunday Even:—Farewell.

Priestly, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of 'such a choice of company, as tends to keep up that right bent, and firmness of mind, which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax. Such fellowship is the true balsam of life, its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world, and it looks for its proper fruit, and complete gratification, to the life beyond the Grave.' Is there a possible chance for such an one as me to realize in this world,

such friendships? Where am I to look for 'em? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship? Alas! the great and good go together in separate Herds, and leave such as me to lag far far behind in all intellectual, and far more grievous to say, in all moral, accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance: not one Christian: not one but undervalues Christianity. Singly what am I to do? Wesley (have you read his life? was *he* not an elevated character?) Wesley has said, 'Religion is not a solitary thing.' Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true, you write to me. But correspondence by letter, and personal intimacy, are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much 'warped and relaxed' by the world! —'Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good night. God have us all in his keeping.

If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey—your literary occupations and prospects—in short make me acquainted with every circumstance, which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a necessarian. Would to God, I were habitually a practical one. Confirm me in the faith of that great and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady in the contemplation of it. You sometime since exprest an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go? Or are you doing any thing towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take a pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of Mankind. I know, I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me,—but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar'—I know I am no ways better in practice than my neighbours—but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself—we encourage one another in mediocrity—I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you; but these are my predominant feelings, when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind, were I to reject them. Yet I rejoice, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading—Priestley on Philosophical necessity—in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great and good. Books are to me

instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.—And how does little David Hartley? 'Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?'—does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame, and opening mind? I did not distinctly understand you,—you don't mean to make an actual ploughman of him? Mrs. C—is no doubt well,—give my kindest respects to her. Is Lloyd with you yet?—are you intimate with Southey? What poems is he about to publish—he hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of this sheet. Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening)—and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say Good night once more, and God love you my dear friend, God love us all. Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you;

CHARLES LAMB.

[The criticisms contained in the first paragraph bear upon Coleridge's *Ode on the Departing Year*, which had already appeared twice, in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* and in a quarto issued by Cottle, and was now being revised for the second edition of the *Poems*.

The personification of Madness was contained in the line, afterwards omitted:

For still does Madness roam on Guilt's black dizzy height.

Lamb's objection to this line, considering his home circumstances at the time, was very natural. In Antistrophe I Coleridge originally said of the ethereal multitude in Heaven:

Whose purple Locks with snow-white Glories shone.

In the 1797 *Poems* the line ran:

Whose wreathed Locks with snow-white Glories shone;

and in the final version:

Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.

Coleridge must have supported his case, in the letter which Lamb is answering, by a reference to the Italian painters.

Coleridge in the 1797 edition of his *Poems* made no alteration to meet Lamb's strictures. The simile that Lamb hated is, I imagine, that of the soldier on the war field. 'That history of child-bearing' referred to is the passage at the end of Strophe II. To the quarto Coleridge had appended various notes. In 1797 he had only three, and added an argument.

Lamb's Mr. Merlin was John Joseph Merlin, who had come to London as a young man from his native France in 1760. Mr. Blunden has found the following contemporary account of him: 'During the latter part of the eighteenth century, this ingenious mechanic, and musical instrument-maker, gratified the curious and tasteful, by the public exhibition of his organ, piano-forte, and other inventions, at his Museum, in Princes Street, Hanover Square. Merlin's mind was adequate to the embracing the whole compass of mechanical

science and execution. . . . One of his ingenious novelties was a pair of *skaites* contrived to run on small metallic wheels.'

The 'last sonnet,' which was not the last in the 1797 volume, but the sixth, was that beginning 'If from my lips' (see first letter).

In connection with Lamb's question on the Stowey husbandry, the following quotation from a letter from Coleridge to the Rev. J. P. Estlin, belonging to this period, is interesting:

Our house is better than we expected—there is a comfortable bedroom and sitting-room for C. Lloyd, and another for us, a room for Nanny, a kitchen, and out-house. Before our door a clear brook runs of very soft water; and in the backyard is a nice *well* of fine spring water. We have a very pretty garden, and large enough to find us vegetables and employment, and I am already an expert gardener, and both my hands can exhibit a callum as testimonials of their industry. We have likewise a sweet orchard.

Three lives at least of John Wesley were published in the two years following his death in 1791. Coleridge later studied Wesley closely, for he added valuable notes to Southey's life (see the 1846 edition).

'A Berkleyan,' i.e. a follower of Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), who in his *New Theory of Vision* and later works maintained that 'what we call matter has no actual existence, and that the impressions which we believe ourselves to receive from it are not, in fact, derived from anything external to ourselves, but are produced within us by a certain disposition of the mind, the immediate operation of God' (Benham's *Dictionary of Religion*).

Coleridge when sending Southey one version of his poem to Charles Lamb, entitled *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison* (to which we shall come later), in July 1797, appended to the following passage the note, 'You remember I am a *Berkleian*':

Struck with joy's deepest calm, and gazing round  
On the wide view, may gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily; a living thing  
That acts upon the mind, and with such hues  
As clothe the Almighty Spirit, when He makes  
Spirits perceive His presence!

'A necessarian.' We should now say a fatalist.

Coleridge's work on the *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, which has before been mentioned, was, if ever begun, never completed.

David Hartley. 'Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?'

This is a truncated quotation from Virgil, *Æneid*, iii. 342-3:

Ecquid in antiquam virtutem animosque viriles  
Et pater Æneas et avunculus excitat Hector?

'Is he kindled at all to the valour of old days and the prowess of manhood by a father like Æneas, an uncle like Hector?']

## 21. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

DEAR COL,

[Dated at end: 16th January 1797.]

You have learned by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked for are not ill expressed in what follows, & what, if you do not object to

them as too personal, & to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth, I should wish to make a part of our little volume.

I shall be sorry if that vol comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very schoolboyish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last Summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addressd you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume.

So frequently, so habitually as you dwell on my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in Contact with a poetical mood—But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle—my tenderest remembrances to your Beloved Sara, & a smile and a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley—The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials) to the Month: Mag: where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognise your Poem on Burns.

#### TO CHARLES LLOYD, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Alone, obscure, without a friend,  
A cheerless, solitary thing,  
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?  
What offering can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,  
That him in aught compensate may  
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,  
For loves & friendships far away?

In brief oblivion to forego  
Friends, such as thine, so justly dear,  
And be awhile with me content  
To stay, a kindly loiterer, here—

For this a gleam of random joy,  
Hath flush'd my unaccustom'd cheek,  
And, with an o'er-charg'd bursting heart,  
I feel the thanks, I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muses' lays,  
And sweet the charm of matin bird—  
'Twas long, since these estranged ears  
The sweeter voice of friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds  
In memory's ear, in after time  
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,  
And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,  
And when the little week is o'er,  
To cheerless, friendless solitude  
When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart,  
The grateful sense shall cherished be;  
I'll think less meanly of myself,  
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

1797.

O Col: would to God you were in London with us, or we two at Stowey with you all. Lloyd takes up his abode at the Bull & Mouth Inn,—the Cat & Salutation would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes cœnæque Delûm!* Anglice—Welch rabbits, punch, & poesy.

Should you be induced to publish those very schoolboyish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the Month: Mag: yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better. But they are too personal, & almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in last Month: Mag: they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em.

My sister's kind love to you all.

C. LAMB.

[The verses to Lloyd were included in Coleridge's 1797 volume; but the verses concerning the frustrated Bristol holiday were omitted. Concerning this visit to London Charles Lloyd wrote to his brother Robert: 'I left Charles Lamb very warmly interested in his favour, and have kept up a regular correspondence with him ever since; he is a most interesting young man.' Only two letters from Lamb to Charles Lloyd have survived.

'We two'—Lamb and Lloyd. Not Lamb and his sister.]

## 22. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun Sunday, 5th February 1797.

Addressed by another hand.]

Sunday morning.—You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock and a bull story of Joan the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a waggoner, his wife, and six children; the texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable, too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

'On mightiest deeds to brood Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart Throb fast. Anon I paused, and in a state Of half expectance listen'd to the wind;' 'They wonder'd at me, who had known me once A chearful careless damsel;' 'The eye, That of the circling throng and of the visible world Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy;' I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines—'For she had lived in this bad world as in a place of tombs, And touch'd not the pollutions of the Dead'—but your 'fierce vivacity' is a faint copy of the 'fierce & terrible benevolence' of Southey. Added to this, that it will look like rivalry in you, & extort a comparison with S,—I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, consider'd in themselves as an addition to what you had before written (strains of a far higher mood), are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, & walk'd and talk'd with him, calling him old acquaintance. Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woeful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which was your aim. 'Hail'd who might be near' (the canvas-coverture moving, by the by, is laughable); 'a woman & six children' (by the way,—why not nine children, it would have been just half as pathetic again): 'statues of sleep they seem'd.' 'Frost-mangled wretch;' 'green putridity;' 'hail'd him immortal' (rather ludicrous again): 'voiced a sad and simple tale' (abominable!): 'unprovender'd:' 'such his tale:' 'Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffer'd' (a most insufferable line): 'amazements of affright:' 'the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture' (what shocking confusion of ideas!) In these delineations of common & natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigné's tenants, 'much of his native loftiness remained in the execution.' I was reading your Religious Musings the other day, & sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the Paradise lost; & even that was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. 'There is one mind,' &c., down to 'Almighty's Throne,' are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading. 'Stands in the sun, & with no partial gaze Views all creation'—I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoice that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper & Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity. In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all,

the Miniature 'There were Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee, Young Robert. Spirit of Spenser!—was the wanderer wrong?' Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson in his life or Waller gives a most delicious specimen of him, & adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, 'it may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole.' I endeavour'd—I wish'd to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer sun-vinegared. Your dream, down to that exquisite line—'I can't tell half his adventures,' is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The remainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, 'He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy.' By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, & in any way you choose, single or double. The India Co. is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents,—such poor & honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I cannot say I know Colson, at least intimately. I once supped with him & Allen. I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the Sublime of Poetry & of Science. Your proposed Hymns will be a fit preparatory study wherewith 'to discipline your young novice soul.' I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dulness.

*Sunday Night.*—You & Sara are very good to think so kindly & so favourably of poor Mary. I would to God all did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her. But our circumstances are peculiar, & we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me fag, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, & used to be ashamed to see her come & sit herself down in the old coal hole steps as you went into the old grammar school, & open her apron & bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me—the good old creature is now lying on her death bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered, I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favourite;



'No after friendship e'er can raise The endearments of our early days,  
Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove, As when it first began to love.'  
Lloyd has kindly left me for a keep-sake, John Woolman. You have  
read it, he says, & like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think  
it could not have escaped you:—'Small treasure to a resigned mind is  
sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility,  
& feel that in us which breathes out this language—Abba! Father!'—  
I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort; but  
I please myself in the thought, that anything from me will be acceptable  
to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed  
to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out;  
2 will be enough—or indeed 1—but 2 better. I have a dim recollec-  
tion that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a  
most prolific subject for a long poem. Why not adopt it, Coleridge?  
there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a  
Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the  
Moon, for instance). Or a Five Days' Dream, which shall illustrate,  
in sensible imagery, Hartley's 5 motives to conduct:—sensation,  
imagination, ambition, sympathy, Theopathy. 1st banquets, music,  
etc., effeminacy,—and their insufficiency. 2d 'beds of hyacinth &  
roses, where young Adonis oft reposes;' 'fortunate Isles;' 'The pagan  
Elysium' &c., &c.; poetical pictures; antiquity as pleasing to the fancy;  
—their emptiness, madness, etc. 3d warriors, poets; some famous, yet  
more forgotten, their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent, pride,  
vanity, &c. 4th all manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse—  
love—friendship, relationship, &c. 5th Hermits—Christ and his  
apostles—martyrs—heaven—&c., &c. An imagination like yours,  
from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great Ideas—if  
indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

*Monday Morn.*—"A London letter. 9½." Look you, master poet,  
I have remorse as well as another man, & my bowels can sound upon  
occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my  
protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to  
those former—this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty  
done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable  
mode of conveyance. Well may the 'ragged followers of the nine'  
set up for flocci-nauci-what-do-you-call-'em-ists! And I do not  
wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America they protest  
against the admission of those yellow-complexioned, copper-color'd,  
white-liver'd Gentlemen, who never proved themselves *their* friends.  
Don't you think your verses on a Young Ass too trivial a companion

for the Religious Musings? 'Scoundrel monarch,' alter that; and the Man of Ross is scarce admissible as it now stands curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the Chatterton, which it does but encumber, & it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition. That, in particular, most bare-faced unfounded impudent assertion, that Mr. Rogers is indebted for his story to Loch Lomond, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce anything is common to them both. The poor author of the Pleasures of Memory was sorely hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. 'He never saw the Poem. I long to read your Poem on Burns; I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print now all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a 2d volume with Lloyd. Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on his mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be I may like 'em—as your taste and mine do not always exactly indentify. Yours,

LAMB.

[Southey's new volume, which Coleridge had noticed, was his *Poems*, second edition, vol. i, 1797. The poem in question was *On my Own Miniature Picture taken at Two Years of Age*.

Edward Fairfax's *Tasso* (*Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recoverie of Jerusalem*) was published in 1600. John Hoole, a later translator, became principal auditor at the India House, and resigned in 1786. He died in 1803.

Coleridge's dream was the poem called *The Raven*.

Citizen John Thelwall (1764-1834), to whom many of Coleridge's early letters are written, was a Jacobin enthusiast who had gone to the Tower with Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke in 1794, but was acquitted at his trial. At this time he was writing and lecturing on political subjects. When, in 1818, Thelwall acquired the *Champion*, Lamb wrote squibs for it against the Regent and others.

Colson was perhaps Thomas Coulson, a friend of Sir Humphry Davy and the father of Walter Coulson who was called 'The Walking Encyclopædia,' and was afterwards a friend of Hazlitt.

'To discipline your young novice soul.' A line from *Religious Musings*, 1796:

I discipline my young novice thought.

'My poor old aunt.' Lamb's lines on his Aunt Hetty repeat some of this praise; as also does the *Elia* essay on 'Christ's Hospital.'

John Woolman (1720-72), an American Quaker. His *Works* comprise *A Journal of the Life, Gospel, Labours, and Christian Experiences of the Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, John Woolman*, and *His Last Epistle and other Writings*. Lamb often praised the book.

'My bowels can sound.' An allusion to Coleridge's motto to the second

number of the *Watchman* which, he records, lost him 500 subscribers: 'A censurable application of a text' from Isaiah xvi. 11: 'Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.'

'Flocci.' See note on page 9.

*The Young Ass*, early versions, ended thus:

Soothe to rest

The tumult of some Scoundrel Monarch's breast.

Coleridge changed the last line to:

The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast.

Coleridge had asserted, in a 1796 note, that Rogers had taken the story of Florio in *The Pleasures of Memory* from Michael Bruce's *Loch Leven* (not *Loch Lomond*). In the 1797 edition another note made apology for the mistake.

Cowper's *Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk* had been written in the spring of 1790. It is interesting to find Lamb reading them just now, for his own *Blank Verse* poems, shortly to be written, have much in common with Cowper's verses, not only in manner but in matter.]

### 23. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Feb. 13th, 1797.

Your poem is altogether admirable—parts of it are even exquisite—in particular your personal account of the Maid far surpasses any thing of the sort in Southey. I perceived all its excellences, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with [a] certain faulty disproportion in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view; I wished to make you reject the poem, only as being discordant with the other; and, in subservience to that end, it was politically done in me to over-pass, and make no mention of merit which, could you think me capable of *overlooking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions in me to be critical. There, I will be judged by Lloyd, whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man whose friend has asked him his opinion of a certain young lady; the deluded wight gives judgment against her *in toto*—don't like her face, her walk, her manners—finds fault with her eyebrows—can see no wit in her. His friend looks blank; he begins to smell a rat; wind veers about; he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity of manners and honesty of heart, something too in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance,—and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentlemen smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a bit of

dinner with Mrs. — and him—a plain family dinner—some day next week. 'For, I suppose, you never heard we were married! I'm glad to see you like my wife, however; you'll come and see her, ha?' Now am I too proud to retract entirely. Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened; you are manifestly wedded to this poem, and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the Joan of Arc, second book.

The solemn openings of it are with sounds which Lloyd would say, 'are silence to the mind.' The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mysteries of theory concerning man's nature and his noblest destination—the philosophy of a first cause—of subordinate agents in creation superior to man—the subserviency of Pagan worship and Pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning with gradual steps her difficult way northward from Bethabara. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican's* daughter, sitting on an ale-house bench, and marking the *swingings* of the *signboard*, finding a poor man, his wife and six children, starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper to receive visions emblematical of equality; which what the devil Joan had to do with, I don't know, or indeed with the French and American revolutions; though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the 'Religious Musings,' I cannot help conceiving of you and of the author of that as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

I have been re-reading your letter. Much of it I *could* dispute; but with the latter part of it, in which you compare the two Joans with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism, I *toto corde* coincide; only I think that Southey's strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration,—these (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *you* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poem, as is natural, will prefer his; if you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion (I am in earnest) I think very nigh equals them. And in an account of a fanatic or of a prophet the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By the way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and, I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularise; the story of the 'Tottering Eld,' of 'his eventful years all come and gone,' is too general; why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of 'cruel wrong and strange distress!' I think I should. When I laughed at

the 'miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture,' I wonder I did not perceive it was a laugh of horror—such as I have laughed at Dante's picture of the famished Ugolino. Without falsehood, I perceive an hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out-of-the-way, something unsimple and artificial, in the expression, 'voiced a sad tale.' I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely 'hailed him immortal,' adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten, not diminish by a phrase which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, 'They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.' Indeed, there is scarce a line I do not like. '*Turbid ecstasy*,' is surely not so good as what you *had* written, '*troublois*.' Turbid rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the '*Religious Musings*,' which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

You were building your house on a rock, when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe, that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the licence of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your '*Maid of Orleans*,' and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it, when 'tis finished.

This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me the 'cherisher of infancy,' and one must fall on these occasions into reflections which it would be commonplace to enumerate, concerning death, 'of chance and change, and fate in human life.' Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but let a man live many days and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.' Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence are gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it? Tell Lloyd, I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's '*No Cross, no Crown*;' I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John Street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a

fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some 'inevitable presence.' This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration—and the effects of it were most noisy—was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible blackguard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk anything more than good sober sense, common morality, and with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit: reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever. A wit! a wit! what could he mean? Lloyd, it minded me of Falkland in the 'Rivals,' 'Am I full of wit and humour? No, indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are.' That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why, Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, 'Wit never comes, that comes to all.' I should be as scandalised at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country-dance. God love you all. You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have her nonsense respected.—Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

[Lamb's Aunt Hetty, Sarah Lamb, was buried at St. Andrew's, Holborn, on 13th February 1797. Henceforward for a while Lamb and his father would be living alone together. The maidservant probably remained.

'As poor Burns expresses it.' In the *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn*, sixth stanza:

In weary being now I pine,  
For a' the life of life is dead,  
And hope has left my aged ken,  
On forward wing for ever fled.

'Turning Quaker.' Lamb refers to the Peel meeting-house in John Street, Clerkenwell. Lamb afterwards used the story of the wit in the *Elia* essay 'A Quakers' Meeting.'

Faulkland is in Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals* (see Act II, scene i).

The next letter is particularly interesting for its news of Mary Lamb.]

## 24. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

*April 7th, 1797.*

Your last letter was dated the 10th February; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like, a silence. There was a time, Col., when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind, but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one's self overlooked and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness (a word by which I mean the diminutive of unkindness). Lloyd tells me he has been very ill, and was on the point of leaving you. I addressed a letter to him at Birmingham: perhaps he got it not, and is still with you. I hope his ill-health has not prevented his attending to a request I made in it, that he would write again very soon to let me know how he was. I hope to God poor Lloyd is not very bad, or in a very bad way. Pray satisfy me about these things. And then David Hartley was unwell; and how is the small philosopher, the minute philosopher? and David's mother? Coleridge, I am not trifling, nor are these matter-of-fact [? course] questions only. You are all very dear and precious to me; do what you will, Col., you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendship[s] like chuck-farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In one little half year's illness, and in such an illness of such a nature and of such consequences! to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again—this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest, in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her. And do, do insert, if you have not *lost*, my dedication. It will have lost half its value by coming so late. If you really are going on with that volume, I shall be enabled

in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air; a friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow. Yet I will beg an alms; I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor Lloyd, and all of you. God love and preserve you all.

C. LAMB.

[Lloyd's domestication with Coleridge had been intermittent. It began in September 1796; in November Lloyd was very ill; in December Coleridge told Mr. Lloyd that he would retain his son no longer as pupil but merely as a lodger and friend; at Christmas Charles Lloyd was at Birmingham; in January he was in London; in March he was ill again and his experiment with Coleridge ended.

'The minute philosopher.' A joking reference to Bishop Berkeley's *Alciphron*; or, *The Minute Philosopher*.

For the dedication to which Lamb refers, see page 44.

Lloyd, who had been at Bath and had left in defiance of Southey's wishes, wrote to Southey from London on 4th April 1797: 'I have *here* created a sort of settled dependance upon myself for the happiness of one or two individuals—there are no beings in Bath so forlorn as Lamb, nor none to whom I can be of so much moral service as White.'

He adds: 'Coleridge has written a very odd letter to Lamb. I don't know what may be his sentiments with regard to our conduct, but I can perceive that he is bent on dissociating himself from us—particularly Lamb I think he has used unkindly.' At the end is a reference to Lloyd's novel, *Edmund Oliver*, from which so much trouble was to come, then in proof.

Mary Lamb would have to live apart, I assume, because of her father, who was steadily declining.]

## 25. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

\* April 15th, 1797.

### A VISION OF REPENTANCE

I saw a famous fountain in my dream,  
Where shady pathways to a valley led;  
A weeping willow lay upon that stream,  
And all around the fountain brink were spread  
Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich clad,  
Forming a doubtful twilight desolate and sad.

The place was such, that whoso enter'd in  
Disrobed was of every earthly thought,  
And straight became as one that knew not sin,  
Or to the world's first innocence was brought;  
Enseem'd it now, he stood on holy ground,  
In sweet and tender melancholy wrapt around.



A most strange calm stole o'er my soothed sprite;  
 Long time I stood, and longer had I staid,  
 When lo! I saw, saw by the sweet moonlight,  
 Which came in silence o'er that silent shade,  
 Where near the fountain SOMETHING like DESPAIR  
 Made of that weeping willow garlands for her hair.

And eke with painful fingers she inwove  
 Many an uncouth stem of savage thorn—  
 'The willow garland, *that* was for her Love,  
 And *these* her bleeding temples would adorn.'  
 With sighs her heart nigh burst—salt tears fast fell,  
 As mournfully she bended o'er that sacred well.

To whom when I address myself to speak,  
 She lifted up her eyes, and nothing said;  
 The delicate red came mantling o'er her cheek,  
 And gathering up her loose attire, she fled  
 To the dark covert of that woody shade  
 And in her goings seem'd a timid gentle maid.

Revolving in my mind what this should mean,  
 And why that lovely Lady plained so;  
 Perplex'd in thought at that mysterious scene,  
 And doubting if 'twere best to stay or go,  
 I cast mine eyes in wistful gaze around,  
 When from the shades came slow a small and plaintive sound;

'PSYCHE am I, who love to dwell  
 In these brown shades, this woody dell,  
 Where never busy mortal came,  
 Till now, to pry upon my shame.

'At thy feet what thou dost see  
 The Waters of Repentance be,  
 Which, night and day, I must augment  
 With tears, like a true penitent,  
 If haply so my day of grace  
 Be not yet past; and this lone place,  
 O'er-shadowy, dark, excludeth hence  
 All thoughts but grief and penitence.'

'*Why dost thou weep, thou gentle maid!  
 And wherefore in this barren shade  
 Thy bidden thoughts with sorrow feed?  
 Can thing so fair repentance need?*'

'O! I have done a deed of shame,  
 And tainted is my virgin fame,  
 And stain'd the beauteous maiden white  
 In which my bridal robes were dight.'

*'And who the promis'd spouse declare,  
And what those bridal garments were?'*

'Severe and saintly righteousness  
Compos'd the clear white bridal dress;  
JESUS, the son of Heaven's high King  
Bought with his blood the marriage ring.

'A wretched sinful creature, I  
Deem'd lightly of that sacred tie,  
Gave to a treacherous WORLD my heart,  
And play'd the foolish wanton's part.

'Soon to these murky shades I came  
To hide from the Sun's light my shame—  
And still I haunt this woody dell,  
And bathe me in that healing well,  
Whose waters clear have influence  
From sin's foul stains the soul to cleanse;  
And night and day I them augment  
With tears, like a true Penitent,  
Until, due expiation made,  
And fit atonement fully paid,  
The Lord and Bridegroom me present  
Where in sweet strains of high consent,  
God's throne before, the Seraphim  
Shall chaunt the extatic marriage hymn.'

*'Now Christ restore thee soon'—I said,  
And thenceforth all my dream was fled.*

The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments. Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry*, of Milton in his 'Comus' and Fletcher in that exquisite thing yeledped the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' where they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's 'Godfrey of Bullen' for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me.

Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks, afraid, he says, to open it, lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very letter of mine was in answer to one, wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his